This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

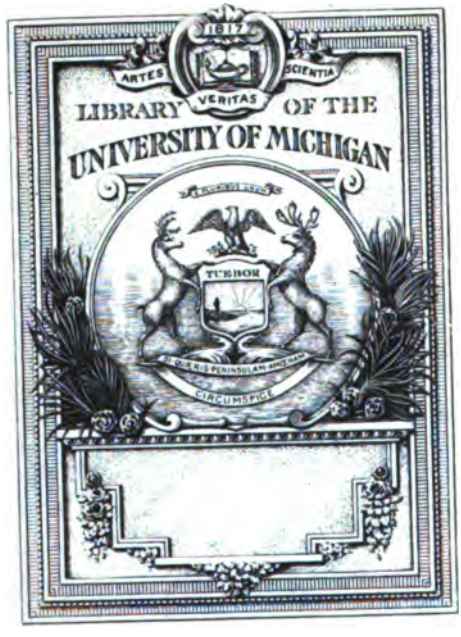
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


1817
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

BX
5037
.B28
1830
v.6

THE WORKS

OF

7
F

DR. ISAAC BARROW.

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.

VOL. VI.

LONDON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY A. J. VALPY, M.A.
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.
1831.

RU

Librarian
Friedmans'
10-16-45
53498

10-16-45 MBL

CONTENTS

OF

THE SIXTH VOLUME.

SERMONS ON THE APOSTLES' CREED.

PAGE

XXII.—EPHESIANS IV. 5.—One Lord. 1

XXIII.—The incarnation of our Lord.
MATTHEW I. 20.—For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 31

XXIV.—The incarnation of our Lord.
MATTHEW I. 20.—For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 48

XXV.—1 CORINTHIANS I. 23.—But we preach Christ crucified. 67

PAGE

XXVI.—I CORINTHIANS I. 23.—But we preach Christ crucified. 76

XXVII.—Dead and buried.

I CORINTHIANS XV. 3.—For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. 109

XXVIII.—He descended into Hell.

ACTS II. 27.—Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. 135

XXIX.—He rose again from the dead.

ACTS I. 3.—To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. 148

XXX.—The third day he rose again, &c.

LUKE XXIV. 46.—And he said unto them, Thus it is written; and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. 174

XXXI.—He ascended into Heaven, &c.

MARK XVI. 19.—He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 191

XXXII.—The reasonableness and equity of a future judgment.

ECCLESIASTES III. 17.—I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked. 219

PAGE

XXXIII.—The certainty and circumstances of a future judgment from divine revelation.

ACTS x. 42.—And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained by God to be Judge of quick and dead. 244

XXXIV.—The divinity of the Holy Ghost.

1 CORINTHIANS III. 16.—Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 279

An Explication of the remaining articles of the Creed. . 311

An Exposition on the Creed. 337

SERMONS

ON THE

APOSTLES' CREED

CONTINUED.

SERMONS.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXII.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 5.

OBSERVATIONS on the name of *God* as common to the three persons of the Holy Trinity, though peculiarly ascribed to the Father: so also on that of *Lord*, though peculiarly ascribed to the Son.

In whatever notion we take the word Lord, he is truly so: according to whatever capacity we distinctly or abstractively consider him, he is so: if we examine all imaginable foundations of just dominion, eminence, or power, he is equally so.

I. He is *our Lord* according to every notion of the word. He is our Prince and Governor, and we are his subjects. It is said of him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, &c.: similar instances adduced.

He is also our Master, and we are his servants. The church is a house and family, whereof he is the *οἰκοδεσπότης*, or householder: this shown.

He is also our owner, or the Possessor and Proprietary of us. St. Peter calls him, *The Lord that bought us. We are not our own*, &c. says St. Paul.

He is likewise our Preceptor and Teacher. *Ye call me Master and Lord*, (*διδάσκαλον καὶ κύριον*,) said he to his disciples; *and ye say well, for so I am*, &c. whence we cannot but be obliged to embrace and obey his doctrine, &c.

He is therefore also our Captain and Leader, to whose orders, conduct, and pattern, we must attend.

II. Christ is also *our Lord*, according to every capacity of *nature* or office appertaining to him.

1. He is so as by *nature*, the *Son of God*, partaking of the Divine essence and perfections: hence the sacred name *Jehovah* is assigned to him: many instances quoted: also that of *Adon*, which more properly signifies *dominion*: this enlarged on.

2. He is also *our Lord*, as *Man*, by the voluntary appointment and free donation of God his Father, in regard to the excellency of his person, and the merit of his performances: this dilated on.

3. Considered also as θεάνθρωπος (*God and man* united in one person) he is plainly our Lord: this shown.

4. If we consider him as *Jesus*, or Saviour, that notion involves acts of dominion; for nothing more becomes a *Lord*, than to protect and save, &c.

5. Likewise if he be considered as *the Christ*, that especially implies him *Anointed*, and consecrated to sovereign dominion, as King of the Church.

III. If we survey the several grounds on which dominion may be built, we have the same result.

1. An uncontrollable power and ability to govern, is one certain ground of dominion: this enlarged on.

2. To make, to preserve, to provide and dispense maintenance, are also clear grounds of dominion: but *in him we live, and move, and have our being. He upholdeth all things*: and it is declared that *without him we can do nothing*, &c. But beside these natural grounds of dominion over us, there are other. We had forfeited the favor and protection of God; the Devil had got us into his power; but Christ redeemed and restored us, &c.

3. He hath acquired us by free donation from God his Father; for *God hath given him power over all flesh*, &c.

4. He hath acquired us by the right of conquest, having subdued those enemies to whom we were addicted and enslaved: but we are now *delivered out of their hands*, that *we should serve him without fear*.

5. He hath farther gained us to himself by the right of purchase; having by a great price bought us, ransomed us out of a sad captivity, and redeemed us from punishment: this enlarged on.

6. He likewise acquired a lordship over us by desert, and as a reward from God, suitable to his performances: this shown.

7. We may add also, that he hath acquired the same as our continual and most munificent benefactor, in the great benefits and privileges which he bestows on us.

8. Yea farther, he is not only thus our Lord, by *nature* and *acquisition*, but also by our own deeds; by the most free, solemn, and obligatory acts of ours: this fully shown.

Some practical reflexions on the subject pointed out.

1. If we are truly persuaded that Christ is our Lord and Master, we must then see how we are obliged humbly to submit to him, carefully to observe his will, and to obey his laws. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?* This topic enlarged on.

2. The consideration of this point clearly demonstrates to us the great heinousness of sin; the madness of opposing irresistible power, and dissenting from infinite wisdom, &c.

3. Again, if Christ be our Lord, we are not at liberty, or at our own disposal, as regards our persons and actions, &c.

4. If he be (as he is) absolutely and intirely such, then can we have no other lords whatever, in opposition to, or in competition with him: *No man can serve two Lords:* this enlarged on.

5. Particularly then, if Christ be our Lord, we are thereby disobliged, yea we are prohibited from pleasing or humoring

men, so as to obey any command, or comply with any desire of theirs, which is repugnant to his will or precepts, &c.

6. This consideration is not only an engagement, but an encouragement to the performance of all duties: especially that hard one, submission to the will of men for his sake: this enlarged on.

7. It is a great comfort also for a Christian, how mean soever he may be in his worldly condition, to consider the dignity and excellency of this relation.

8. And as it is a comfort to the meanest, so it is no shame or disparagement to the highest of men, to serve such a Lord.

9. St. Paul makes use of this consideration to press on superiors their duties towards their inferiors; those of equity, mercy, meekness, &c.

10. Indeed it is in general an inducement to all sorts of charity. *We must*, saith St. Paul, *walk worthy of our calling*, &c.

11. Particularly it obliges us to exercise that piece of charity and justice, which consists in forbearing rash and harsh censure, &c. *Who art thou that judgest another's servant?*

12. It is proposed by our Saviour himself, as an engagement to imitate himself in the practice of all piety and virtue: see John xiii. 13-15.

13. Finally, for our satisfaction and encouragement, we may consider that the service of Christ is rather a great freedom than a service; in which all things are allowed to us, except such as are unprofitable or injurious: this topic enlarged on. Conclusion.

Our Lord.

SERMON XXII.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 5.

One Lord.

As the name of God (truly common to all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity) is (not in way of exclusion, but) according to a mysterious peculiarity (κατ' οἰκονομίαν, in way of dispensation, accommodated to our instruction, as the Greek fathers express it) attributed to God the Father, who is the Fountain of the Deity, and first in order among the divine persons; so likewise is the name Lord, truly common to the other persons, peculiarly (though also not exclusively) ascribed and appropriated unto God the Son; who therefore in the style of the New Testament, which more fully hath revealed him, is called sometimes absolutely Lord, sometimes the Lord Jesus, sometimes our Lord; to acknowlege and call him so, being the especial duty, and the distinctive mark or character of a Christian: for, to us, as there is one God and Father of all, and oue Holy Spirit, so there is, as St. Paul here in my text doth say, 'one Lord.' And otherwhere; 'There be' (saith he, there be, according to popular estimation and worldly use) 'gods many, and lords many; but to us there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.' Hence to call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (that is, by confession and practice to acknowlege him our Lord) gives a periphrasis, or description of a Christian, ('To the church of God that is in Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all that call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place;' that is, together with all Christians everywhere; so doth St. Paul

inscribe his first Epistle to the Corinthians;) whence, 'No man,' saith he in the same Epistle, 'can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;' that is, no man can heartily embrace Christianity without the gracious assistance of God's Holy Spirit. The reason of which appellation being so peculiarly attributed unto Christ, may be, for that, beside the natural right unto dominion over us, necessarily appertaining to him as our God, who hath made us, and doth preserve us, there are divers other respects and grounds supervenient, and accruing to him from what he hath undertaken, performed, and undergone for us, in spontaneous obedience to the will of God his Father, on which also the title of Lord is due unto him: the which to declare first, then to apply them unto our practice, shall be the subject and scope of our present discourse.

In whatsoever notion we take the word Lord, either as a prince over subjects, or as a master over servants, or as an owner of goods, or as a preceptor and president over disciples; or as a leader and captain to followers, or as a person singularly eminent above inferiors, he is according to all such notions truly our Lord.

According to whatever capacity we distinctly or abstractively consider him, either as the Son of God, or as the Son of man, or as θεάνθρωπος, (jointly God and man, united in one person,) as Jesus our Saviour, as the Christ of God, he is our Lord.

If we examine all imaginable foundations of just dominion, eminence in nature and power, the collation of being or preservation thereof, donation, conquest, purchase, merit, voluntary compact; on all these he hath a right of lordship over us duly grounded.

I. He is, I say, first, our Lord according to every notion and acception of the word Lord.

He is our Prince and Governor, we are his subjects and vassals; for to him it was said, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kindgom is a right sceptre.' Of him it was prophesied that 'the government should be on his shoulder,' and that 'of the increase of his government and peace there should be no end;' he is the King of Israel, or of the church, who, as the angel told the blessed Virgin, 'shall

reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever.' 'God hath given him head over all things to the church.' So is he a Prince most absolute, endued with sovereign right and power, crowned with glorious majesty, enjoying all preeminences, and exercising all acts suitable to regal dignity, in respect to all things, and particularly in regard to us.

He also is our Master, and we are his servants; the church is a house and family, whereof he is the οἰκοδεσπότης, or householder: 'If,' saith he, 'they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household?' (τοὺς οἰκιακοὺς αὐτοῦ, *famulos ejus*, his domestics, or menial servants.) 'All the family in heaven and earth are named of him,' saith St. Paul; that is, the whole church (both triumphant above in heaven, and militant here on earth) is his family, or called the family of him, as of its Lord. 'Christ,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'is as a son over his house, whose house are we:' 'He that is called free is a servant of Christ;' and, 'We serve the Lord Christ:' and, 'We have a Master in heaven,' saith St. Paul: 'Blessed,' saith our Lord himself, 'is that servant, whom his Lord coming shall find so doing;' that is, whom Christ, our Lord, coming to judgment, shall find discharging his duty faithfully. He indeed as a good Master governeth, ordereth, and maintaineth his family well; furnisheth and feedeth it with all necessary provisions; protecteth it from all want and all mischief; appointeth to every one therein his due work and service, and payeth to each his due wages and recompense.

He is also our Owner, or the Possessor and Proprietary of us; 'The Lord that bought us,' as St. Peter calls him; and consequently, who possesseth and enjoyeth us. 'We are not our own,' saith St. Paul; 'for we were bought with a price:' whence we are become intirely subject to his disposal.

He likewise is our Preceptor, or Teacher; that is, the Lord of our understanding, which is subject to the belief of his dictates; and the Lord of our practice, which is to be directed by his precepts. 'Ye,' saith he, 'call me Master, and Lord, (διδάσκαλον, καὶ κύριον, Doctor and Lord,) and ye say well, for so I am:' and, 'Be ye not called masters, (καθηγηταὶ, guides in doctrine,) for one is your Master, even Christ:' and, 'Every

thought of ours,' saith St. Paul, is to be captivated to the obedience of Christ. Such, as infallibly wise, and perfectly veracious, he necessarily is unto us; such he is, as sent on purpose by God to enlighten our minds with the knowlege of heavenly truth, and 'to guide our feet into the ways of peace;' whence we cannot but be obliged to embrace his doctrine, and to observe the rules which he prescribeth us.

He is therefore also our Captain and Leader; whose orders we must observe, whose conduct we should follow, whose pattern we are to regard and imitate in all things: he is styled ἀρχηγὸς πίστεως, 'the Captain of our faith;' ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς, 'the Captain of our life;' ἀρχηγὸς σωτηρίας, 'the Captain of our salvation;' ἀρχιποίμην, our chief Shepherd, the Apostle, and High Priest of our profession; the Bishop of our souls. In fine, he, according to what St. Paul says, ἐν πᾶσι πρωτεύει, 'hath in all things the primacy and preeminence;' so that according to all notions and senses of lordship he is our Lord; but chiefly he is meant such in the principal sense, as having an absolute right and power to command and govern us.

II. Christ is also our Lord according to every capacity or respect of nature or office, that we can consider appertaining to him.

1. He is our Lord as by nature the Son of God, partaking of the divine essence and perfections: he as such being endued with eminence superlative and with power irresistible; as such having created all things, and upholding all things; whence all things necessarily and justly are subject to his order and disposal; all things according to all right and reason are to be governed, possessed, and used according to his pleasure. Hence is that most august and most peculiar name, JEHOVAH, (denoting either independency and indefectibility of subsistence, or uncontrollable and infallible efficacy in operation, or both of them together; which therefore is by the Greek interpreters fitly rendered Κύριος, and after them Lord by our translators; for the word κύρειν doth signify to subsist, and κύρος is used to denote efficacy, ratification, steadfast power or authority) assigned to him; 'This is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,' saith Jeremiah of him: and, 'I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will

save them by Jehovah their God,' saith God in Hosea concerning the salvation accomplished by him: and in the prophet Zechariah he thus speaks of himself; 'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee:' where it is said that Jehovah, being sent by Jehovah, should come and dwell in the church, enlarged by accession of the Gentiles: who can that be, but our Lord Christ, who dwelt among us, and was by God his Father sent unto us? And what in the Old Testament is spoken of Jehovah is by infallible expositors in the New attributed to our Lord; 'Sanctify Jehovah Sabaoth, and he shall be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence;' so did Isaiah speak; and his words are by St. Peter and by St. Paul applied to Christ. 'Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered;' so did the prophet Joel foretell concerning the latter days; and St. Paul accommodates it to the salvation obtained by confessing the name of Christ. In Malachi, Jehovah saith that 'he would send his messenger to prepare his way before him;' this, according to the Evangelists' interpretation, was verified in St. John the Baptist's preparing the way before our Saviour. Likewise, what Isaiah said, 'The voice of him that cried in the wilderness, Prepare the way of Jehovah,' is by all the Evangelists applied to the Baptist, as the voice crying, and to our Saviour, as the Lord coming: Christ therefore is the Lord Jehovah, independent and immutable in essence and in power.

The word *Adon* also, which more immediately and properly doth signify dominion, (and which put absolutely doth belong to God,) is plainly attributed to our Saviour. 'The Lord (Jehovah) said to my Lord' (*le Adonai;*) that is, God the Father to Christ the Son, yet Lord of David, as our Saviour himself expounds it. And, 'The Lord (*ha Adon*) shall come to his temple;' so in Malachi it is prophesied concerning the coming of Christ. According to this notion was it, that St. Thomas, being by our Saviour's resurrection convinced of his divinity, cried out, My God, and my Lord: in this sense it was, that St. Peter called our Saviour Lord, when he ascribed omniscience to him, saying, 'Lord, thou knowest all things,

thou knowest that I love thee.' On this account, St. John the Baptist said, 'He that cometh from above is above all things,' which St Paul expresseth thus; 'The second man is the Lord from heaven.' So is Christ, as he is God, our Lord.

2. He is also our Lord, as man, by the voluntary appointment and free donation of God his Father; in regard to the excellency of his Person, and to the merit of his performances. God did by gift and delegation confer on him a supereminent degree of dignity and authority, with power to execute the most lordly acts of enacting, of dispensing with, and of abrogating laws; of judging, of remitting offences; of dispensing rewards, and of punishing transgressors. The Scripture is copious and emphatical in declaring this point both in general terms and with respect to particulars. 'Let all the house of Israel,' saith St. Peter, 'know assuredly, that God hath made him Lord and Christ, even this Jesus, whom ye did crucify:' and, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh:' 'All things are delivered unto me by my Father:' 'All power is given me in heaven, and on earth:' 'The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand;' saith he concerning himself; and, 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord:' and, 'God raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church:' and, 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor:' and, 'The Lamb which was slain is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and blessing:' and, 'When the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory, ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' In which places, as in others of the same importance, it is signified generally, that beside the dominion, naturally belonging

to our Saviour as God, there hath been conferred on him, as man, an universal dominion over all things in regard to what, as man, he did and suffered; and that in him, as the Apostle to the Hebrews observeth and discourseth, that hath been signally fulfilled, which the psalmist acknowlegeth, and praiseth God for, in respect to man; 'Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hand, and didst put all things in subjection under his feet.' In him also was accomplished the prophetical vision of Daniel; 'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man—And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' It is also particularly expressed of him, that to him, as man, is committed a power legislative; I say unto you, I command you, is the style he commonly used: and, 'The Son of man,' said he, 'is Lord of the sabbath;' (that is, hath a power to dispense with the observation thereof, or to abrogate the positive law concerning it; which by parity of reason infers a general power of constituting and rescinding laws of the like nature.) The prerogative also of remitting sins was given him; 'That ye may,' saith he, 'know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and walk:' and, 'The God of our fathers,' saith St. Peter, 'hath raised Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.' The administration of justice and judgment he thus also hath; for he is, ὡρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ κριτὴς, 'ordained by God the judge of quick and dead;' God hath appointed to judge the world, ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισε, 'by the man whom he hath ordained;' 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son—and hath given him authority to execute judgment also,' ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστί· 'because,' or whereas, 'he is the Son of man:' so also for the prerogative of distributing rewards and inflicting punishments; 'The Son of man,' saith he, 'shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and reward every man according to his

work.' Thus by emphatical expression it is signified that Christ, as man, is our Lord, by God's appointment and donation. We may also consider that our Saviour, as the Son of David, and consequently by a right of succession, according to divine ordination, as King of Israel, (to the which all Christians are become proselytes; for, προσεληλύθατε Σιὼν ὄρει, 'Ye are proselytes to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews,) is our Lord; according to that of the angel to the blessed Virgin; 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give him the throne of David his Father; and he shall reign over the house of Israel for ever and ever:' 'Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, on the throne of David, and on his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever:' so Isaiah foretold of him; and many like passages occur in other prophets.

3. Considered also as θεάνθρωπος, (God and man, united in one Person,) he is plainly our Lord. For whatever naturally did appertain to God, whatever freely was (in way of gift or reward) communicated to man, doth accrue to the Person, and is attributed thereto, in consequence of the union hypostatical, or personal. It was indeed by virtue thereof, that the man Christ Jesus became capable of so high preferments; wherefore most properly on this consideration is Christ 'the Lord of all,' as St. Peter styles him; 'having all things (him only excepted, who did subject all things to him) put under his feet.'

4. If we also consider him as Jesus, our Saviour, that notion doth involve acts of dominion, and thence resulteth a title thereto: nothing more becomes a Lord than to protect and save; none better deserves the right and the name of a Lord, than a Saviour; wherefore those titles are well conjoined; 'I am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour,' saith God in Isaiah of himself;' and, 'Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to his right hand,' saith St. Peter concerning Jesus.

5. Likewise if he be considered as the Christ, that especially implieth him anointed, and consecrated to sovereign dominion, as king of the church: well therefore did the angel express his

joyful message when he told the shepherds; 'I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord:' and St. Peter well joined them, saying, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Thus in all respects is Christ our Lord.

III. Let us also farther briefly survey the several grounds on which dominion may be built, and we shall see that on all accounts he is our Lord.

1. An uncontrollable power and ability to govern is one certain ground of dominion; he that is endued therewith, it is necessary that we should submit to him, it is reasonable willingly to admit him for our Lord: persons so qualified, Aristotle telleth us, have a natural title to dominion; as, on the contrary, persons weak, (in power or in wisdom,) unable to protect themselves, and unfit to manage things, are naturally subjects and servants. This ground eminently agrees to him, as being by nature the Almighty God, who can do all things, whom nothing can resist; and also for that 'all things are given into his hand,' all things are put under his feet. Hence he is most able to protect us; 'the gates of hell cannot prevail against his church; none can snatch us out of his hand; he is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God through him.'

2. To make, to preserve, to provide and dispense maintenance, are also clear grounds of dominion; for what can we more justly claim dominion over, than over our own inventions and works; over that which we continually keep and nourish; over that which wholly depends on us, and subsists merely by our pleasure? Since then 'in him we live, and move, and have our being;' since we have derived all our being from him, (our being natural as men, and spiritual as Christians,) and are by him 'who upholdeth all things,' sustained therein; since, as to all our powers and in all our actions we depend on him; for 'without him we can do nothing,' and, 'all our sufficiency is of him;' he surely is our Lord, having an absolute right to dispose of us, to order us, and to use us, according to his discretion and pleasure. We thence have reason to render that ac-

knowlegement of the elders in the Revelation of him; 'Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive the glory, and the honor, and the power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy will they are, and they were created;' to confess and celebrate him as our Lord, for that, as it is in the Psalm, 'It is he that made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.' Thus by birth and privilege of nature, as the Son of God, heir apparent, and consort of eternal Majesty; thus also, as concurring with his Father in the divinest actions of creation and providence, is Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord.

But beside these natural grounds of dominion over us, there are several others considerable, each of them, according to the standing rules of justice and equity, sufficient to found a good title thereto. We (considering ourselves as the sons of Adam, in that state wherein Christ found us, or wherein we should now be, if he had not vouchsafed to come and redeem us) had attempted to withdraw ourselves from our due subjection to God, by wilful rebellion and disobedience; we thence had forfeited the benefit of God's favorable protection and providence for our good: we had become outlaws, dead in law, ('dead in trespasses and sins;') we, instead of being subjects and servants of God, were become (or should have been) 'aliens, and enemies to God by wicked works,' according to the natural 'blindness of our minds not knowing (or acknowleging) God;' in our affections estranged and averse from him, in our practice opposite to his holy will and righteous laws, we in a manner were got out of God's possession; were in respect to him become imbecile and lost; we were 'like sheep gone astray' out of the fold of his gracious care and governance; we had got other masters, and were come into other hands; like those who in the Prophet confess, 'O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us.' The devil had got us into his power; we were captivated (or taken alive, as St. Paul phraseth it, ἐζωγρημένοι) at his will; we were detained under wretched subjection, overpowered and oppressed by him; who therefore is called the Prince and the God of this world; to whose suggestions it hearkened, whose will it observed, whom it was prone even to worship and adore. The world also (whose 'friendship is

enmity to God,' which 'all lieth in wickedness') had prevailed over us, so as to walk according to it; to be governed by its corrupt principles and vicious practices; to be driven by its force, and drawn by its allurement, into evil. We were captives and slaves also 'to the law of sin ruling in our members; serving divers lusts and pleasures;' being in our actions guided by a carnal mind, opposite to God and goodness; swayed by sensual appetites, and hurried by violent passions to what is bad: this was the condition of mankind generally when Christ came, and would have so continued; but out of it he came to deliver us; by the merit of his blood, and power of his grace, to free us from the oppressions of all those usurping powers; to recover and restore us into the propriety, possession, and protection of God. 'He came to seek and to save that which was lost;' 'to save us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;' 'to deliver us out of the power of darkness, and to translate us into his own kingdom,' the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. So that he hath acquired us to himself; we being now περιποίησις, an acquist made by him, as St. Paul calleth us, and λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, as St. Peter speaks, a people by acquisition peculiarly appertaining to him: and divers ways we have been acquired to him, as to our Lord.

3. He hath acquired us by free donation from God his Father; for 'God hath given him power over all flesh;' 'God hath delivered all things into his hand;' 'God hath subjected all things under his feet.' Peculiarly God hath given unto him those who comply with his gracious invitations and suggestions; his 'sheep, that hear his voice, and follow him;' them hath God given him, to govern them with especial favor, and keep them with a particular care; 'Whom,' saith he, 'thou hast given me, I have kept;' and, 'This is the will of the Father that sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing.'

4. Again, he hath acquired us by just right of conquest, having subdued those enemies unto whom (partly by their fraud and violence, partly from our own will and consent) we did live enslaved and addicted: them he vanquished, 'having spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them

openly, triumphing over them.' Whence we rightly fall under subjection to him, as accessions to his victory; having formerly belonged to his enemies, and having by his mercy been preserved: he might justly have deprived us of liberty and of life: might have utterly destroyed us, or have detained us in woful misery, as dependents on and partisans with his foes; ourselves together with them being found in open hostility against him: but 'according to his great mercy he saved us;' and did put us into a capacity of a free, comfortable, and happy life under him, 'calling us to his kingdom and glory.' We therefore being *subacti potentia*, (subdued by his power,) become *jure subditi*, (in right subject to him,) [being *servati*, we are made *servi*;] being saved from death by him, we according to justice and reason become vassals to him, so that all our life should be devoted to his service; that (as it is in the hymn *Benedictus*) 'being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, (his enemies, and our enemies also, no less in truth and effect,) we should serve him without fear.'

5. He hath also farther acquired us to himself by purchase; having by a great price bought us, ransomed us out of sad captivity, and redeemed us from grievous punishment due to us. We, as heinous sinners and rebels, had forfeited our lives to God's law, and were sentenced unto a miserable death; we had lost our liberty, and were thrown into a grievous prison, fettered in guilt, lying under wrath, and reserved to punishment unavoidable; we were stripped of all goods, all comfort, all hope and remedy: such was the case of man, when he procured a redemption, a pardon, a deliverance and restitution for us; delivering up himself 'a ransom for us all;' undergoing a punishment for our sins, discharging our debts, propitiating divine justice, acquitting us from all claims and pretences on us; yea meriting for us a better state than we did ever before stand in: thus 'he purchased his Church with his own blood;' whence, as St. Paul argues, 'we are not our own, for we are bought with a price.' In requital for such mercies and favors so unexpressibly great, we cannot, either in gratitude or justice, owe less than ourselves to be rendered up wholly to his dominion and disposal; it is our duty therefore to be his subjects and servants; and it was indeed the intent of his doing

so much for us, that we should be so: he did all *gratis*, (most freely,) as to any precedent motive beside his own goodness; but he would not do it fruitlessly, as to effect; 'To this end,' saith St. Paul, 'Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living:' 'He died for all, that they, which henceforth live, should not live to themselves, but unto him which died for them:' and, 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

6. He likewise acquired a lordship over us by desert, and as a reward from God, suitable to his performances of obedience and patience, highly satisfactory and acceptable to God; 'For this the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again:' 'He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the death of the cross; therefore also did God exalt him, and gave him a name above every name:' 'For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross; and having despised the shame, sat down at the right hand of the glory of God:' 'We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor:' 'He drank of the brook in the way, therefore he hath lifted up his head:' 'Because he poured out his soul unto death; therefore did God divide him a portion with the great, and he did divide the spoil with the strong,' as the prophet expresseth it.

7. We may add, that he hath acquired a good right and title to dominion over us, as our continual most munificent benefactor; by the great benefits he bestoweth on us, by the ample hire and large recompense he pays us. He affords us a sure protection under him, and a liberal maintenance; high privileges, and ample rewards for our service: it is no Egyptian bondage that he would detain us in, requiring hard labor, and yielding no comfort or recompense; but it is a most beneficial and fruitful service. Christ hath promised 'to withhold no good thing' from his servants; nothing requisite for the support or convenience even of this temporal life, (for to them 'who seek the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, even all these things shall be added,' or cast in;) but especially most inestimable precious recompences he hath promised, and will certainly bestow in spiritual and eternal blessings; 'He will

render to every man according to his works; to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life;' saith St. Paul: and, 'Being freed from sin,' saith he again, 'and made servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and in the end everlasting life:' a fruit to sanctification, that is, all benefits conducing to our spiritual welfare here, and hereafter a life in perpetual joy and happiness. To them who have been diligent in performing their tasks, and improving their talents committed to them now for his interest and honor, he will one day say, 'Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy:' and, 'Blessed,' saith our good Master, 'are ye, when men shall revile you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great shall your reward be in heaven.' Now he that is at such care and charges for us, who feeds and furnishes us so plentifully, who rewards our small pains, our poor works, our unprofitable services, (such indeed we must confess all that we can do to be,) with so high and bountiful wages, him surely most justly we should esteem, and most willingly call, our good Lord and Master.

8. Yea farther yet, our Saviour Jesus is not only our Lord by nature, and by acquisition in so many ways, (by various performances, deserts, and obligations put on us,) but he is also so by our own deeds, by most free and voluntary, most formal and solemn, and therefore most obligatory, acts of ours. He is our Lord and King by election; we finding ourselves oppressed by cruel tyrants and enemies, groaning under intolerable slaveries, loaded with heavy burdens, plunged into grievous distresses, tormented with anxious fears, regrets, and sorrows, had our recourse unto him, on his gracious invitation, offering us deliverance, ease, and refreshment, under his most equal and gentle government; 'Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'—'Take my yoke on you;—for my yoke is easy, and my burden light:' so he was pleased to invite us; and so we did, or have at least seemed and pretended to undergo his yoke, freely submitting to his government: we have vowed perpetual allegiance and fealty to him, as to our lawful Prince; we have promised intire subjec-

tion to his will, and sincere obedience to his laws; we have engaged, forsaking all things, to follow him; to follow him as our Captain, and to fight resolutely under his banners, against the common enemies of his glory and our salvation. We did, συμφωνεῖν, (as it is in the parable,) contract and agree with him on certain conditions and considerations, most advantageous to ourselves, to be his faithful servants, and diligently to perform his work: we renounced all other masters; yea resigned up all claim to any liberty or power over ourselves; becoming absolutely devoted to his will and command: this we did at our baptism, in most express and solemn manner, and in every religious performance we confirm our obligation; when we acknowlege his right over us, and our duty toward him; when we implore his protection, his succor, and his mercy; when we promise our humble respect and obedience to him: if our daily confessions do signify any thing; if our vows and protestations have any truth or heart in them; if our prayers are serious, our praises are hearty, our communions have in them any thing of good earnest and sincerity; we do by them continually tie faster the band of this relation and duty toward him; he by our renewed choices, and consents, and promises, and acknowlegements, doth appear to be our Lord. But let thus much suffice for explication of this point; or for considering on what grounds Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is our Lord; now for practical application of the point thereof.

1. The general influence which this doctrine may and should have on our practice is very obvious and palpable. If we are truly persuaded that Christ is our Lord and Master, we must then see ourselves obliged humbly to submit unto and carefully to observe his will; to attend unto, and to obey his law, with all readiness and diligence; for, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' is the expostulation of our Lord himself, implying it to be a vain and absurd profession, an irrational and illusive pretence we make, when we avow and invoke him as our Lord, but withal disclaim his authority in our practice, by slothfully neglecting or wilfully disobeying his commands: 'Not every one that sayeth, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven;' that is, not he that makes

loud and eager professions (crying Lord, over and over again) is in God's esteem a loyal subject, or faithful servant, or shall obtain the rewards assigned to such; but he that, although perhaps more sparing in words and pretences, doeth really his duty, and performs the will of God. 'Many,' saith our Saviour again, 'shall in that day (in that great day of final account and recompense) say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophesied, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Not only bare professions and acknowlegements are insufficient, but even the fairest and most plausible actions done in the name of Christ will avail nothing, without real obedience to the law of Christ; even then, when such actions are performed, Christ doth not know them; that is, doth not esteem them his servants; the working of iniquity rendering them uncapable of that name and privilege. Such persons do, as St. Paul speaks, 'profess to know him, (or acknowlege him as their Lord,) but with their works they deny him; who are disobedient, and to every good work reprobate,' (that is, on trial found bad and false;) 'they,' as St. Peter says, 'deny the Lord that bought them.' 'Do ye not know,' saith St. Paul, 'that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey?' and, 'Every one,' saith our Saviour, 'that doeth sin, is the servant of sin:' and, 'By whom,' saith St. Peter, 'a man is overcome, to him he is made a servant,' or enslaved, (δεδούλωται.) It is not what we say, but what we do; not what we would seem, but what we indeed are, doth really constitute, and truly denominate us servants: we not only shall lose the rewards and privileges granted to the servants of Christ, but we do even forfeit all claim to the very name, if we disobey his commands, being indeed properly servants to those lusts which sway us; to that devil whose pleasure we fulfil; to that world, whose bad manners we follow: we do but invade and usurp the name of Christians, if our practice is not conformed to the precepts of our Lord.

2. Indeed the consideration of this point doth clearly demonstrate to us the great heinousness of sin; how many follies, iniquities, basenesses, and ingratitudes lie complicated therein: the

madness of opposing irresistible power, and dissenting from infallible wisdom: the unworthiness of offending and abusing immense goodness; the injustice and disloyalty which are couched in the disobedience of him, who by so many titles, and on so many obligations, is our Lord; the abusiveness of evacuating all his laborious and expensive designs in acquiring us; the levity and giddiness of disavowing him by our practice, whom we so often have acknowleged our Lord, and vowed intire subjection unto.

3. Again, if Christ be our Lord, then are we not our own lords, or our own men; we are not at liberty, or at our own disposal, as to our persons or our actions: those rules of the civil law, 'that a servant can possess nothing of his own, that no profit can simply accrue to him,'* but all in result must go to his lord; that he is reckoned nobody in law, and the like, do most perfectly agree to us in regard to Christ, who is on so many accounts absolutely our Lord, infinitely more than one man can be to another. We consequently must not think to have our own wills, we must not attend our own business, we must not please our own appetites, or gratify our own desires, or enjoy our own pleasures, or follow our own fancies, or regard our own profits, or seek our own honor; we must not undertake or prosecute any thing merely our own, or farther than doing so is subordinate unto or consistent with the service, interest, and glory of our Lord: otherwise we do constitute ourselves the lords and masters, in effect renouncing and casting off him: if he be truly our Lord, it is his will and word that should be the rule of all our actions; which we should diligently attend unto, which we should readily observe: it is his business, that we should with especial care mind, and most earnestly prosecute; it is his advantage and credit, that we should propound unto ourselves, as the main aims of all our endeavors. Whatever we design or undertake of moment, we should do it with this formal consideration and reference; doing it as the servants of Christ, from conscience of our duty to him, with intention therein to serve him, with expectation

* Arist. Pol. i. 3.

of reward only from him; according to those apostolical precepts; 'Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of our Lord:' we must 'glorify him with our bodies and our spirits, which are his:' we must 'not live to ourselves, but to him that died, and rose again for us:' since 'whether we live or die,' (that is, whatever action we set on relating either to life or death,) 'we are the Lord's;' we should direct all to his honor, profit, and service.

4. If Christ be our Lord, (absolutely and intirely such,) then can we have no other lords whatever, in opposition to him, or in competition with him; or otherwise any way than in subordination and subserviency to him; 'No man,' as he doth himself tell us, 'can serve two lords;' that is, two lords having collateral or equal authority; their injunctions will interfere, oppose, or supplant one the other; our affections will incline to one more than to the other; at least we shall be detained in hovering suspense; our leisure, our care, our endeavor being employed in the service or attendance of one, will force us to neglect and disappoint the other; 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;' serving wealth (that is, eagerly affecting it, and earnestly pursuing it) is inconsistent with our duty to Christ; the like may be said of honor, of pleasure, of curiosity, of any worldly thing; for, 'He that will be a friend of the world, is thereby,' saith St. James, 'constituted an enemy of God;' and if he thereby be made an enemy, he surely can be no good servant; a servant being (as the philosopher calls him) *humilis amicus*, a meaner sort of friend; who performeth service out of good-will and affection; like St. Paul, who discharged that high and laborious service, of preaching the gospel, incumbent on him, and of that kindly necessity which he expresses, saying, 'The love of Christ constrains me;' or, as St. Peter injoins those particular servants of Christ (employed by him in teaching and guiding his people) to do their duty, μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς, ἀλλ' ἑκουσίως, 'not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;' or as St. Paul chargeth all servants, μετ' εὐνοίας δουλεύειν, 'to serve with good-will, as to the Lord, and not to men.' It is indeed the proper nature and the

necessary condition of this service, that we decline, forsake, renounce, detest all other obligations, all affections, all incumbrances, which may avert us from a close adherence thereto. 'Whoever,' saith he, 'he be of you, that forsaketh not (or, who renounceth not, who biddeth not farewell to, ὃς οὐκ ἀποτάσσεται) 'all that he hath, cannot be my disciple,' or my follower and servant: 'If any man cometh after me, and do not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea and his own life, he cannot be my disciple;' he cannot indeed truly and heartily be so, who in love and observance of Christ will not readily forsake and lose all.

5. Particularly therefore, if Christ be our Lord, we are thereby disobliged, yea we are indeed prohibited, from pleasing or humoring men, so as to obey any command, to comply with any desire, or to follow any custom of theirs, which is repugnant to the will or precept of Christ: 'If,' saith St. Paul, 'I did yet please men,' (that is, humor, soothe, or flatter them, so the word ἀρέσκειν doth import,) 'I were not the servant of Christ;' that is, I were not such in effect, I did in so doing not behave myself as a servant of Christ; as it becomes such an one, and as such an one is obliged to do. And, 'Ye,' saith he again, 'are bought with a price, be not the servants of men,' (or, 'ye are not the servants of man,' so the words will bear rendering;) that is, ye therefore do not, or ye therefore ought not, to perform service to men, absolutely as such, or with ultimate relation unto them; but when ye lawfully and allowably do it, ye do it out of conscience, and regard to Christ, as his servants. We may indeed, yea in duty we must, obey men humbly and willingly, diligently and faithfully, in our stations, and according to our conditions, as we are placed and called in this world, either as subjects or servants; but we must do this in subordination to our principal and supreme Lord; in obedience to his command, and with regard to his service; so we are taught by St. Paul; 'Servants,' saith he, 'obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, (that is, very respectfully and carefully,) in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ; doing the will of God from the soul; serving with good-will, as to the Lord, and not unto men:' and,

'Be subject,' saith St. Peter, 'to every human constitution, διὰ τὸν Κύριον, for the Lord;' (that is, out of conscientious regard or affection to the Lord; because he is our Lord;) 'as free, and not having your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God:' yea, 'Whatsoever' (saith that wise instructor, St. Paul, again) 'ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive back the recompense of inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.'

6. It is, we see, (which may be another improvement of this consideration,) not only an engagement, but an encouragement to the performance of all duty; particularly to the performance of those hard duties, (so contrary to natural will and stomach,) cheerful obedience and submission to men; who often, as St. Peter intimates, are σκολιοὶ, crooked, or untoward, and harsh in their dealings with their servants; to whom yet on this consideration he injoins us willingly to yield obeisance, no less than to the good and gentle; for that in this and all other performances of duty we do serve a most equal and kind Master, who will graciously accept our service, and abundantly requite it; a Lord, that will not suffer his servants to want any needful sustenance, any fit encouragement, any just protection or assistance; who will not only faithfully pay them their promised allowance, but will advance them to the highest preferment imaginable. No man ever had reason to complain with them in the prophet; 'It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?' No; the devil himself, with envy and regret observing the benefits and blessings which the pious man enjoyed in regard to his faithful service, could not but say; 'Doth Job serve God for nought? hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.' No wonder, argued the detracting spirit, and little thank or praise is due to a servant, whose service is so bountifully rewarded. Indeed our Lord is not only just and faithful, so as to render unto every man ἴδιον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, 'a proper reward answerable to his proper pains;' but he is exceedingly, beyond expression, liberal in

bestowing on his servants retributions infinitely surpassing the desert and worth of all their labors: for their small, weak, faint, imperfect, and transitory endeavors, (by all which he is indeed really nothing the richer, or the greater,) he returneth blessings in nature, in degree, in duration, immensely great, precious, and glorious. He fails not here to feed them with food convenient, to clothe them decently, to supply all their needs, to comfort them in all distresses, to keep them in all safety, to deliver them from all evil; he afterwards conferreth on them a kingdom, an incorruptible and unfading crown; a state of perfect joy and endless glory.

7. It is a great comfort also for a Christian (how mean and low soever in his worldly condition) to consider the dignity and excellency of this his relation; how great and how good a Lord he serveth; that the greatest princes are his fellow subjects; (for, 'He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords:' 'All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.') Yea, that the highest angels are his fellow servants; (as the angel in the Revelation told St. John.) That although his Lord be so high in power and glory above all, yet he is so gracious, as not to neglect or despise him; but condescendeth to regard the lowest of his servants with equal care and favor as the highest; 'He accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they all are the work of his hands,' said good Elihu; and they all, we might add, are the price of his blood.

8. And as it is a comfort to the meanest, so it is no shame or disparagement for the greatest of men to serve such a Lord; it is a relation in itself more worthy and honorable than the highest dignity or preferment in the world: to wear a crown, how rich soever; to command the whole earth; to possess all the land, and all the gold under heaven, are beggarly, trivial, and sordid things in comparison thereto; a servant of Christ (the apostolical style) is a style far more glorious than all those windy titles, which the greatest monarchs assume to themselves; having such a place in God's peculiar regard and care doth exceed all privileges and advantages, all glories and dignities, which any person is capable of: well therefore did St. Paul, in respect to 'the excellency of the knowlege of Jesus

Christ his Lord,' esteem all such things (all worldly privileges and benefits) as loss and as dung, as things detrimental and despicable; wisely did the holy Apostles forsake all things, (all their dearest relations, all their sweetest enjoyments, all their secular occupations,) to follow such a Lord. ('Behold,' saith St. Peter, 'we have let go all things, and have followed thee.') Most just and reasonable are those sentences pronounced against those vainly proud, or perversely contumacious people, who are ashamed to obey him, or do reject his government; 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, or of my words, him shall the Son of man be ashamed of, when he comes in the glory of himself, and of his Father, and the holy angels.' Them who proudly disdain to serve him here, will he with just and sad disdain reject hereafter from his face and favor; yea with dreadful vengeance will he punish their perverseness; 'Those mine enemies,' will he say, 'that would not have me reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.'

9. St. Paul also maketh use of this consideration, to press on superiors their duties toward their inferiors; their duties of equity, meekness, kindness, mercy, pity, and all humanity; 'Masters,' saith he, 'yield unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven:' and, 'Ye masters,' saith he again, 'do the same things to them, (perform the like good offices, show the same goodwill to your servants,) forbearing menaces; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.' Thus in Leviticus God commandeth his people not 'to rule over their servants with rigor,' assigning this reason, 'For they are my servants,' &c. And we know how our Saviour, as he doth commend and bless those wise and honest servants, who, being appointed over his household, (that is, being placed in any superior rank or charge,) do behave themselves justly and kindly to their fellow-servants, 'dispensing to them their food in due season;' so on those who injuriously or rudely do beat or abuse their fellow-servants; who are harsh, rigorous, or unmerciful in exactions of debt, or in any other dealings toward them, he denounceth severe chastisement. 'A servant of the Lord (that is, one employed by Christ in any office or charge) must not fight, but must be gentle

unto all,' saith St. Paul; such indeed should be the humility and goodness of Christians one toward another, that the greatest of them should stoop to the meanest offices and expressions of good-will to their brethren; 'He,' saith our Lord, 'that will be great among you, let him be your minister; and he that will be first of you, let him be your servant.'

10. The consideration indeed of Christ being our Lord, is in general an inducement to charity, to all sorts of charity. 'We must,' saith St. Paul, 'walk worthy of our calling, with all lowliness of mind, and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace;' because we are members of the same body, whereof Christ is the head, and fellow-servants of the same Lord. It is an endearing and obliging relation; it becometh us and concerneth us, being so of one family, to be courteous and gentle, kind and helpful one to another; to maintain peace, quiet, and love one with another; it is a just duty and respect to our common Master, who loveth order and peace, who hateth confusion and dissension in his house; who is himself full of charity toward every one of his, and therefore hath enjoined it as the especial duty, hath declared it to be the most distinctive character of his servants and followers; 'Hereby,' saith he, 'shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'

11. Particularly this consideration doth oblige us to exercise that piece of charity and of justice which consists in forbearing rash and harsh censure; which practice is not only very uncharitable and unjust toward our brethren, but it also a wrongful and arrogant encroachment on our Lord himself, unto whom only the right of decision in such cases doth appertain; unto whose infallible and impartial judgment both they and we are obnoxious; 'Who art thou,' saith St. Paul, 'that judgest another's servant?' (or domestic; ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην:) 'to his own master he standeth or falleth:' and, 'Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?' and, 'We shall all be presented before the judgment-seat of Christ:' 'There is,' saith St. James, 'one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?' It is, we see, an invading our Lord's right and au-

thority, without most evident and reasonable cause, to censure or condemn our fellow-servants.

12. The consideration of this point our Saviour doth also improve, as an engagement to imitate himself in the practice of all virtue and piety; especially in the practice of charity, humility, and patience. It is proper for a servant to follow and attend on his master in all places and in all performances; to compose himself in behavior to the manners and example, to conform himself to the garb and condition of his Lord: is it not absurd and unseemly that the servant should be more stately, or more delicate than his master; that he should slight those whom his master vouchsafes to respect; that he should refuse to undertake those employments, should scorn to undergo those hardships, which his master doth willingly condescend unto? To such purpose our Saviour discourseth; impressing by this argument on his disciples the duties of humility, charity, and patience, by him exemplified for that very end; 'Ye call me,' saith he, 'Master, and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am: if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' And having directed his disciples to the patient enduring of reproaches, affronts, and injuries put on them, he enforces his precept by subjoining, 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord:' 'it is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord;' that is, the servant in all reason ought to be very well content, if he find such usage as his lord hath willingly and patiently undergone. And he thus again impresses these duties on them; 'He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve:' 'for whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? but I am among you as he that serveth.' Yea, St. John raiseth this consideration so high, that he saith thus; 'Because he laid down his life for us, we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'

13. Finally, for our satisfaction and encouragement, we may consider that the service of Christ is rather indeed a great freedom than a service; it is a reducement into a most desi-

rable estate, wherein we fully enjoy that wherein liberty is defined to consist, ἐξουσίαν αὐτοπραγίας, power of doing whatever (as reasonable and wise men) we please ourselves to do; wherein all things are lawful to us, excepting only such things as are unprofitable to us, or hurtful. What Aristotle made the character of a just prince, (whose government doth nowise prejudice true liberty,) that he doth not in his government chiefly aim at his own profit, but his subjects' good, is perfectly true of our Lord: he is indeed capable to receive no private benefit to himself, beside satisfaction in our welfare; all his laws and commands, all his administrations and proceedings, are purely directed to our advantage. Even the statutes which God gave to Israel by Moses are said to have been 'commanded for their good,' not for any good that could accrue to God from their observance: much more are the laws of Christ purely such; conducing to the health, the safety, the peace, the comfort, the joy, the happiness both of our bodies and souls; of the present temporal life here, and of our immortal state hereafter; 'His religion is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Well therefore might St. James call the law of Christ 'a perfect law of liberty;' well might our Saviour say, 'If the Son set you free, then are ye free indeed.' What the Stoics vaunted of themselves, the Christian modestly and truly may say, that he is the only free man; it is this philosophy only, to which those words of Seneca may truly be applied; 'You must serve philosophy, that you may attain true liberty:'* for, if to be above the reach of all considerable evil or mischief; if to be safe from all enemies, and secure from all impressions of fortune; if to have no reason much to fear, or much to grieve for any thing; if not to desire things base, or things immoderate; if to have an especial command over one's self, is (as those philosophers define it) properly liberty; then is he most free that serves our Lord. If to be rescued from the servitude of disorderly passions and base vices is the greatest freedom, then the good Christian chiefly doth enjoy it. 'A good man,' saith St. Austin,† 'although he serve, is free;

* Sen. Ep. 8. et 88. † Aug. de Civ. Dei, iv. 112.

a bad man, although he reign, is a slave; not of one man, but; which is more grievous, of so many lords, as of vices.' Such indeed is the benignity of our Lord, that he treats his faithful servants rather as friends than as servants; 'Ye are,' saith he, 'my friends, if ye do whatever I command you; I call you no more servants.' Yea he bears to them the affection of a brother, and affords them the honor to be so styled; 'Go,' saith he, after his resurrection, to Mary Magdalene, 'to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and to your God:' and, "Ιδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην, 'See ye what love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God.'

Full of so many practical uses is this excellent point; the which I leave to be farther deduced by your meditation.

Now, 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;' to whom be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXIII.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSE 20.

THREE particulars couched in these words. 1. The incarnation of *Jesus*. 2. The principal efficient cause of this incarnation, *the Holy Ghost*. 3. The concurrence of the *Virgin Mary*, as the subject of that divine virtue and operation.

Our Saviour Jesus was conceived and born; that is, the only Son of God, the *eternal Word of God*, &c., had *in the fulness of time* a production agreeable to the nature of man; becoming thereby really and truly a man, *like unto us in all things, sin only excepted.*

He was not so (as the Gnostics and some other heretics have contended) merely in shape and outward appearance, but in truth; having a real body like us, and a soul endued with the same faculties: this topic enlarged on.

Now concerning this great dispensation, several inquiries and considerations may be made: these stated.

I. As to the manner of this mystery; to which we might modestly and discreetly answer, with the schoolman; *it is not in man to define what manner of communication this is*, &c.: we cannot indeed otherwise than by negation determine; not otherwise than by comparison explain it. This enlarged on.

1. The natures were ἀσυγχύτως, that is, without any confusion or commixtion: this shown.

2. The incarnation was performed ἀτρέπτως, that is, without conversion of one nature into another: the divinity could not be turned into humanity; &c.

3. The natures were also joined ἀδιαιρέτως, undividedly, so that they had not distinct subsistences, &c.

4. We must also understand them to be united ἀχωρίστως, inseparably; so that they never are severed; the union is never dissolved; &c.

With regard to illustration of this mysterious union by comparison, it may be observed that nature affords one similitude very apposite; that is, the union of a man's soul and body: this shown.

II. With regard to the reasons why the Son of God assumed our nature, the chief and clearest was, God's design thereby to exercise and show his immense goodness, mercy, and pity towards us.

Particular reasons assigned, why our Redeemer should be *God:* that by his power he might be able to save us; that by the dignity of his person he might conciliate God's favor to us; that his doctrine and example might possess the greatest efficacy, and his laws the greatest authority; &c. Moreover the redemption and salvation of man was an honor too great, a work too difficult, for any *creature* to be dignified with; &c.

Particular reasons also assigned, why he should be *man*: that, by perfectly obeying God's commands and patiently submitting to God's will, *as man*, he might procure God's favor towards men; that as man had deeply wronged and offended God, so man also should highly content and please him, &c. It was fit also that he who thus interceded for us should be tender of our good, and sensible of our necessities, &c.: he was to be man also, that so he might declare God's great and merciful designs to us in a more easy, obliging, and efficacious manner, especially through his own example; that he who was appointed to be our judge, should be not only as God, of perfect wisdom, &c. but as man visible and audible to us, endued with natural compassion, &c. Finally, that he who was to be the

great reconciler between God and man, should be most nearly allied to both parties.

III. Practical use of this doctrine considered.

1. It should have influence on our love and gratitude: for what words can express, what thoughts conceive, favors so inconceivable and ineffable?

2. It should engage us, as universally to all obedience, so particularly to the duties of humility, patience, and charity: this dilated on; and the bright example of our Lord set forth.

3. It should raise our minds to a sense of the dignity of our nature accompanied with suitable dispositions of heart and deportment of life.

4. It should fill our hearts with spiritual joy and comfort; for there never can be a greater and juster cause of rejoicing than this, that our Lord is born and come. This birth compared with that of any earthly prince. This victory and its consequences stated. This publishing of peace, this recovery of liberty, this coming of a good friend, dilated on. Is it a comfortable thing to be graced with honor? Is mirth seasonable to the day of marriage? Is the sun's rising, after a long and dark night, cheerful and pleasant? In all cases how much more joyful is the nativity of our Lord! Conclusion.

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

SERMON XXIII.

THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSE 20.

For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

WITHOUT any preface, or circumstance of speech, we observe three particulars couched in these words. 1. The incarnation of Jesus our Lord, implied by the word τὸ γεννεθὲν, 'that which is conceived,' or generated. 2. The principal efficient cause of this incarnation; the Holy Ghost; by whose immediate operation, without any active influence of man, he was generated, is of the Holy Ghost. 3. The concurrence of the blessed Virgin Mary, as the subject of that divine virtue and operation; he was conceived in her. On each of these particulars, being all of them considerable points of that faith which we daily profess, (and especially proper subjects of our meditation at this time,) I shall reflect, observing somewhat profitable for our edification both in way of right knowlege, and in tendency to practice.

I. Our Saviour Jesus was conceived and born; that is, the only Son of God, our Lord and Redeemer, the same who 'was from the beginning,' and did, as St. John in the entrance of his gospel teacheth us, from all eternity exist with God, the eternal 'Word of God, by whom all things were made,' was in the fulness of time conceived and born; that is, had a production agreeable to the nature of man, becoming thereby truly and

really a man; which wonderful mystery is in Scripture by various phrases expressed and implied; by the Word being incarnated, that is, being made, or becoming, flesh; 'God being manifested in the flesh;' 'The Son of God being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh;' 'partaking of flesh and blood;' his 'taking the form of a servant,' 'being made in the likeness of men,' 'being found in fashion as a man,' 'assuming the seed of Abraham;' his 'descending from heaven,' 'coming forth from the Father,' 'being sent, and coming into the world:' 'The dayspring from on high visiting us,' 'eternal life being manifested;' the result of what is signified by these and the like expressions, that, The blessed and glorious person, who before from all eternity did subsist in the form or nature of God, being the Son of God, one in nature with his Father, (the express image, or exact character of his substance,) did by a temporal generation truly become man, assuming human nature into the unity of his Person; by a real conjunction and union thereof to the divine nature, in a manner incomprehensible and ineffable, He did, I say, truly become man, like unto us in all things, as the Apostle saith, sin only excepted; consisting, as such, of all the essential ingredients of our nature; endued with all our properites and faculties, subject to all passions, all infirmities, all needs, adherent or incident to our nature and condition here.

He was not only (as the Gnostics and some other heretics have conceited) in shape and outward appearance, (as a spectre, deluding men's sight and fancy,) but in most real truth, a very perfect man; having a real body, figured and circumscribed as ours, compacted of flesh and blood, visible and tangible; which was nourished and did grow, which needed and received sustenance, which was tender and sensible, frail and passible; which was bruised with stripes, torn with scourges, pricked with thorns, pierced with nails, transfixed with a spear; which was mortal, and underwent death by expiring its breath, and being disjoined fiom the soul that enlivened it. He had also a soul, endued with the same faculties as ours; with an understanding, capable of learning and improvement; (for he was, as man, ignorant of some things which he might know; and 'he grew,' it is said, 'in wisdom and in stature:') with a will sub-

ject and submissive to the divine will; (for, 'Let this cup,' said he, 'if it be possible, pass from me: but however let not my will, but thy will be done:' and, 'I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me:') with several appetites, of meat, of drink, of sleep and rest; (for we read that he was hungry, that he thirsted, that he was weary:) yea with various passions and affections, (φυσικὰ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη, I mean, that is, natural and irreprehensible passions;) and these of the most troublesome and afflictive sort, such as zeal, pity, sorrow; the which were sometime declared by very pathetical significations, and are expressed in high terms; as on occasion of his friend Lazarus's death it is said, 'He groaned in spirit and was troubled;' he then, and on other occasions, out of pity and sorrow, did weep; and ye know what excesses of sorrow, what anxieties and agonies, what tribulations, disturbances, and amazements the Evangelists, using those very terms, describe him to have undergone at his passion; so that, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh, 'We have not an high-priest that could not compassionate (or sympathise with) our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted (or exercised and proved) as we are, yet without sin.'

So it appeareth that the Son of God (co-eternal and co-essential with his Father) became the Son of man; truly and intirely partaking of the nature and substance of man, deficient in no essential part, devoid of no property belonging to us; exempt from no imperfection or inconvenience consequent on our nature, except only sin; the which is not a natural so much as a moral evil; did not arise from man's original nature, but proceedeth from his abused will; doth rather corrupt than constitute a man.

Now concerning this great dispensation several inquiries and considerations may be made, concerning the manner of it, how therein God did assume our nature; or how therein God and man subsist united; concerning the reason of it, whence it proceeded, and why it was designed; concerning the use and influence of it, which it should have on our practice.

1. As for the first point, the manner of this mystery, we may well, in discretion and modesty, answer with the Schoolman; 'It is not in man to define what manner of communication this

is, whereby the human nature is communicated to the Word;' we cannot indeed otherwise than by negation determine, not otherwise than by comparison explain it. No words perhaps, which we do use to signify our conceptions about these material and inferior things, will perfectly and adequately suit to a mystery so much remote from the common objects of our knowlege, so far transcending our capacity; to affirm positively that this wonderful incarnation did come to pass, that this incomprehensible and ineffable union doth persist in this or that manner, may be rash and dangerous; it would cease to be admirable, if we could fully conceive or express it; but this justly and safely we may assert, that whatever manner of conception or expression about it doth plainly derogate from the divine perfections, or is irreconcilably repugnant to the nature of things, or disagreeth with the tenor of revealed truths evidently connected unto or depending on this mystery; or which (either directly and immediately, or obliquely and by manifest consequence) doth contradict the language and doctrine of the holy Scriptures, is to be rejected by us: whence we may for exclusion of errors and mistakes about this point, with the holy Fathers, and particularly with the great council of Chalcedon,* assert that in the incarnation of our Lord the two natures, divine and human, were united ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως.

1. The natures were, I say, united ἀσυγχύτως, that is, without any confusion or commixtion; for such a way of blending would induce a third nature different from both, such as resulteth from the composition and contemperation of the elements into a mixed body; such a commixtion being supposed, our Lord would be neither God nor man, but another third kind of substance, such as must not without any ground or authority be supposed; that would destroy, diminish, or alter the properties of each; which is unsound to say, and impossible to be; for the divine nature is not capable of any diminution or alteration: wherefore both nature sin this mystery do subsist intire, distinct, and unconfused, each retaining its essential and natural properties.

* Syn. Chalc. Act. v. (fin.) pag. 340.

2. The incarnation was performed ἀτρέπτως, that is, without conversion or transmutation of one nature into another: the divinity could not be turned into humanity; for how could God, (the eternal, self-subsistent, most simple, and immutable Jehovah,) as such, be anywise changed or made, become infirm and passible, consist of body and soul, suffer and die? Nor could the humanity be turned into divinity; for how could that which did not subsist at all before the incarnation be therein converted into another thing? why should our Saviour ever be called man, when his humanity was by translation into divinity destroyed? why is it said, 'the Word was made flesh,' if the flesh was changed into the Word? to omit, how impossible it is that one substance should be transmuted into another, especially a corporeal into a spiritual, a finite into an infinite; to omit likewise the many dangerous consequences of this position, and its inconsistency with many principal and plain doctrines of our religion, particularly the real passion and death of our Lord, which could not be incident to him otherwise than as retaining the true nature of man.

3. The natures were also joined ἀδιαιρέτως, undividedly; that is, so as they have not distinct subsistences, or do not constitute two persons: for there is but one Christ, one Person, to whom, being God, and being man, are truly and properly attributed.

4. We must also understand the natures to be united ἀχωρίστως, inseparably; so that they never are severed, the union is never dissolved; the same person never ceasing to be both God and man; not even then, when our Lord, as man, did undergo death; for he raised himself from the dead, he reared the temple of his own body, being fallen: as being God, he was able to raise himself; as being man, he was capable to be raised by himself; the union between God and man persisting, when the union between human body and soul was dissolved.

We might add, in farther exclusion of erroneous conceits, that this mysterious union was not made κατὰ παράστασιν, by assistance, or close presence only, nor κατ' ἐνοίκησιν, merely by inhabitation, nor κατὰ σχέσιν, by relation, nor κατ' ἀξίαν, by estimation, nor καθ' ἁρμονίαν, by conformity, in will and practice, nor κατὰ ταυτοβουλίαν, by consent; as Nestorius and other

heterodox dogmatists anciently, in opposition to the catholic exposition of this mystery, did imagine: but it doth not seem worth the while to discuss those antiquated conceits, or with more subtilty to intrigue the point.

As for illustration of it by comparison, I shall only (passing over divers more wide and improper resemblances; such as those of Bellarmine,* the union of a man's arm to his body, the incision of a bough into a tree, and the like) observe that nature doth afford us one similitude very apposite for explication of this mysterious union; which is the union of a man's soul and body, whereby he becometh one person. The soul and body are two substances, very different in kind, in properties, in dignity: the one of itself material, extended, divisible, passive and corruptible, lifeless and senseless; the other immaterial, indivisible, incorruptible, self-moving, endued with life, knowlege, passion: both of them are also capable of separate existence, or of subsistence by themselves; yet are these two, although in a manner difficult for us to conceive or comprehend, closely united together, and do concur to the making up a man; and that so as to remain still in substance distinct, each retaining its natural properties, without any confusion, or any conversion of one into the other; so also that from them the same man receiveth the denominations of corporeal and spiritual, of mortal and immortal: in a like manner (although in a degree more admirable and incomprehensible) are the divine and human natures conjoined in our Lord; for, as we hear in the Athanasian Creed, 'As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.' So much for the manner.

2. As for the reason why the Son of God did assume our nature; the chiefest and clearest reason thereof was, God's design thereby to exercise and demonstrate his immense goodness, mercy, and pity toward us; 'So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son:' 'In this the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him:' 'Through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high did visit us:' it

* Salmeron. apud Gerard. in loc. Exeget. p. 441. Bel.

was χρηστότης καὶ φιλανθρωπία, 'the benignity and philanthropy of God,' which induced him to engage his Son on such a debasement and exinanition of himself, that we thereby might be raised to a capacity of salvation.

If we farther desire to contemplate the wisdom of God in this admirable proceeding, and to know why God, among other means and methods alike (for all we can know) possible to him, did choose in this way to transact our redemption; it may be answered that it becometh us rather to adore the depth of God's wisdom herein, than to sound it, or to hope by searching to reach the bottom of it: yet some congruities of this method to the reason and exigency of things are in the Scripture intimated to us, and in some manner are discernible by us, sufficient to recommend the divine wisdom therein to our admiration; reasons may be assigned why our Redeemer should be θεάνθρωπος, why God, why man. It well became God to stoop down thus, that, as his goodness toward us was infinite, so the demonstrations thereof, to his glory and our benefit, should be answerably such; which perhaps could not otherwise be than by such a condescension: as a prince could not make any other so great attestation of favor to his vassal, as by descending from his throne, laying aside his majesty, putting himself into a like condition, conversing freely with him, subjecting himself to the same laws and duties, enduring the like hardships and inconveniences with him.

It was expedient that our Redeemer should be God, that he might be able by his power to save us; to remove those huge obstacles that crossed our salvation, to subdue those potent enemies which opposed it; to command and conquer nature, to vanquish the powers of hell, to abolish death in our behalf.

It was requisite that he should be the co-essential natural Son of God, that by the nearness of his relation to God, by the supereminent dignity of his person, by the immense value of his merit, he might conciliate God's favor to us, fully appease his wrath incensed against us, and satisfy his justice abused by our offences.

It was convenient that his doctrine should carry with it the highest certainty and strongest efficacy; that his example

should challenge the greatest regard and strictest imitation; that his laws should have supreme authority, and with greatest advantage oblige us: fit therefore it was that he should be God, and have the character of divinity stamped on what he said and performed.

The redemption and salvation of man did import an honor too august for any creature to be dignified with; it was a work too difficult and mighty for any but God to achieve; it was not proper that any creature should be principal in managing an affair of such height and importance: needful and expedient therefore it was, that our Saviour should be God.

It was also requisite, on many accounts, that he should be man; that by perfectly obeying God's commands, and submitting patiently to God's will, as man, he might procure God's favor toward man; that as man had deeply wronged and offended God, so man also should highly content and please him; in St. Paul's language, that 'as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,' (that is, were condemned and exposed to death, on God's just displeasure for that one man's transgression, backed with the like in his posterity,) 'so by the obedience of one man many should be made righteous,' (that is, all who would imitate his obedience should be absolved from guilt, exempted from punishment, and received into grace; God being well pleased with and reconciled to mankind, especially to his followers, in regard to that man's dutiful observance of his will.) Decent it was, that as man did approve, so man also should 'condemn sin in the flesh;' that as man by wilful self-pleasing did incur misery, so by voluntary suffering he should recover happiness; Ἔπρεπε, 'It did,' as the Apostle saith, 'become him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.'

It was also fit that he who was designed to intercede for our welfare, to propitiate for our faults, to succor and relieve our distresses, should be tender of our good, and sensible of our needs; that he therefore should by nature and experience be disposed συμπαθεῖν, to 'compassionate our infirmities,' and μετριοπαθεῖν, to be 'gently affected toward us,' in respect of our ignorances and errors; whence ὤφειλε, he, saith the divine

Apostle again, according to the design appointed to him, and undertaken by him, ought, or 'it did behove him to be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God; that he might propitiate for the sins of the people; for in that he hath himself suffered being tempted, he is also able to succor those that are tempted.'

He was to be man also, for that by appearing in human shape, visible and audible, familiar and agreeable to us, he was qualified for that great design of declaring God's will and intentions toward us in a more easy, less amazing, and more obliging way, than otherwise could have been: for that hence likewise he could, with more advantage, describe an exact copy of righteousness for us to transcribe; showing us exemplarily how as men we should behave ourselves; how we should moderate our sensual appetites, how govern our passions, how order and employ all the powers of our soul and members of our body; how pass through all conditions, and entertain all events befalling us; it not being indeed otherwise possible that so lively and suitable a pattern of transcendent charity, meekness, humility, and patience, could have been exhibited to us.

Fit it also was, that he who was to be appointed our judge, substitute of the supreme Judge invisible, should be, as God, (of perfect wisdom, and so able to discern all matters of fact, to distinguish all points of right; of perfect rectitude, so as never willingly to discost from truth and equity,) so also man; visible and audible to us, without surprising astonishment and terror; apt to screen us from the insupportable presence of God; endued with a natural tenderness of good-will and compassion toward us, disposed to temper needful severity with competent mildness.

In fine, it was most congruous that he who was designed to 'recapitulate and reconcile,' as St. Paul speaketh, 'all things in heaven and earth,' to be the great mediator and peacemaker between God and man, for the repairing God's honor and dispensing his grace, for the 'purchasing our peace' and procuring our salvation, that he should be most nearly allied unto both parties; that consequently, if possible, (and what is to God, the author of this economy, impossible?) he should be both

God and man; Son to God, and brother to us; the same in nature with God, in kind with us. Such reason and wisdom is discernible in this dispensation.

III. Now for the practical use of this doctrine, (for it is not a doctrine merely speculative, and barren of fruit, or practical use:) it should, first, have a powerful influence on our minds, causing us, with high degrees of love and gratitude, to adore the infinite goodness of that God, who hath been pleased himself to stoop so low, that he might advance us from the lowest depth of meanness and wretchedness, to the highest pitch of honor and happiness that we are capable of: what words can express, what thought can apprehend a favor so unconceivable and ineffable? Well might St. Paul call it ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην, 'love transcending all knowlege:' well may heaven admire, and earth be astonished, and hell tremble at the disclosure of such a mystery, at the accomplishing such a miracle of grace and mercy; that the sovereign Majesty of heaven, the eternal Lord of glory, the world's great Maker, the only Son of God, and heir of all things, should become a poor, small, weak, and frail man; should dwell in a tabernacle of flesh; should converse with silly, wretched, and frail mortals here; should be exposed to want, disgrace, and pain: ὦ βάθος, O depth of goodness and mercy unsearchable! if this will not, what consideration can raise us, what benefit can affect us? what prodigious ingratitude will it be, to be regardless or insensible of kindness so wonderful?

2. Another great use of this point is to engage us, as universally to all obedience, so particularly to the duties of humility, of patience, and of charity. Did the Son of God thus willingly submit, and so abase himself; and shall we then be refractory, shall we exalt ourselves; shall we refuse any appointment, or repine at any proceeding of God? Did he from the highest pitch of glory super-celestial voluntarily descend into this gloomy region and state of ignoble security; did he, abandoning immense wealth, freely embrace extreme poverty; did he gladly sequester himself from those ineffable joys above, to converse with sorrow and sadness here, in this valley of tears, for God's sake and ours; and shall we be unwilling to do any thing for God's sake, or to part with any thing for him?

To these purposes doth St. Paul apply the consideration of this point; 'Let,' saith he, 'the same mind' (the same humble, patient, meek, charitable mind) 'be in you, which was in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God—emptied himself, taking on him the form of a servant; being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death:' it was the greatest argument and instance of humility, patience, and charity that could be, for him, that did exist in the form of God, thus to debase himself, to partake of our nature, and submit to our state: and, 'Know,' saith that Apostle again, 'the grace (or graciousness) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being himself rich, for your sake he became poor,' (being rich as God, and Lord of all things, he put himself into this mean and poor condition of man,) 'that ye, through his poverty, might be rich:' it was a consideration surely most proper to his purpose of inciting unto charity.

3. The consideration of this point should raise our minds to a sense of the dignity of our natue, accompanied with dispositions of heart and deportments of life answerable thereto: by our Lord's incarnation our nature is so advanced, that we become nearly allied to God, of the blood-royal of heaven, in this respect overtopping all the creation of God; so that hereby, as the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth, that of the Psalmist was verified, concerning man; 'Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:' the angels themselves cannot boast of such an honor; for 'he took not the nature of angels, but he took the seed of Abraham:' being therefore so highly dignified, we should have a mind suitably great and noble, loving, delighting in, aiming at the most excellent things, void of base cares, of sordid desires, of unworthy designs; we should, in all our conversation, demean ourselves worthily and decently, like the brethren of Jesus and children of God; that we may not disparage and disgrace this illustrious alliance. As our Lord did vouchsafe, in most condescensive grace, to resemble us, so should we, with a generous and honest ambition, aspire to resemble him; as he stooped to humanity, so let us rear ourselves to a kind of divinity, in pu-

rity of mind and sanctity of life; so St. Gregory Nazianzen exhorteth; 'Let us,' saith he, 'be as Christ, since Christ is become like us; let us, for his sake, be gods, seeing he is become man for us.'

4. The consideration of this point should fill our hearts with spiritual comfort and joy; there never can be a greater occasion or juster cause of rejoicing than this, that our Lord is born and come: it is signally *Evangelium*, good tidings; never news more welcome hath come into the world; never report more grateful was heard by mortal ears: it is news from heaven, and the best that ever came thence; 'Behold,' (said the angel that brought it, and a message it was most worthy the mouth of an angel,) 'I tell good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:' news, at which all heaven was pleased and ravished with joy, breaking presently forth into hymns of praise and congratulation; 'There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, and good-will to men.' In this, if we mark it, all the grand causes of extraordinary joy and festivity do conspire.

Is the birth of a prince ever by honest subjects entertained and celebrated with joy? Behold a Prince born to all the world; a Prince that cometh to rule mankind with perfect equity and clemency; to bring with him all peace and prosperity; to achieve the most noble exploits that could be undertaken in our behalf, to protect us in most assured safety, to defend us from all evil, to subdue and destroy all the enemies of our welfare, to rescue us from the greatest slaveries and miseries, to settle us in perfect happiness: he bringeth 'salvation from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us; so that being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.'

Is victory glorious and joyful? See the invincible warrior is issued forth into the field, 'conquering and to conquer;' he that shall quell, disarm, and rifle the strong one, that shall rout all the forces of hell, that shall defeat sin, and slay death itself, that shall subdue the world, and subject all things to himself: the Captain of our salvation appeareth, triumphing in

humility; the great blow is given; the Devil's pride and envy are abased; all the enemies are amazed, are daunted, are confounded at his presence; they cannot stand, they break, they scatter, they flee before him.

Is the publishing of peace acceptable? Behold eternal peace between heaven and earth, a general peace among men, a peace of conscience between man and himself, is now established and proclaimed: the illustrious ambassador, the noble hostage, the infallible pledge thereof is arrived; 'Preaching peace to them that are far off, and to them that are near.'

Is recovery of liberty comfortable unto slaves and captives? Behold the Redeemer is come, the great ransom is laid down sufficient to purchase the freedom of whole worlds: innocence appearing in human nature hath unlocked the prison of sin, in which we were closely detained; hath broken the shackles of universal guilt, which sorely pinched mankind: he is come, who is anointed to preach (αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν) 'dismission to the captives.'

Is the coming of a good friend to be congratulated? Behold, the best friend to all mankind (bringing with him most wholesome advice, most needful succor, most seasonable consolation) is arrived to visit us, and dwell with us.

Is it a comfortable thing to be graced with honor? What greater honor could mankind be dignified with, than this of receiving the Son of God into its kind and kindred? What could more advance and adorn us than this high relation?

Is mirth seasonable to the day of marriage? Behold heaven and earth this day are coupled, divinity is espoused to humanity, an eternal indissoluble knot of amity, of unity, is tied between God and man; the great Bridegroom is come forth clad in his nuptial garment of flesh, ready to wed the church, his beloved spouse.

Is the sun's rising (after a long, dark, and cold night) cheerful and comfortable? See, the 'Sun of righteousness is risen, with healing in his wings;' dispensing all about his most pleasant light, and salutary influences; 'The day-spring from on high hath visited us,' diffusing an universal light on the souls of men, dispelling the night of ignorance and error, 'shining out to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and

guiding our feet in the way of peace:' 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen on thee,' &c. Never did heaven with so clear and serene a countenance smile on earth, as it did this day, when this super-illustrious luminary (this bright morning star, as he is called in the Apocalypse) did spring up above our horizon. From this auspicious day commenced the revocation of that fatal curse, by which we were exiled from Paradise, condemned to death, exposed to hell; the reinstating us in a condition of hope, in a capacity of happiness; the return of life and joy into this region of corruption and disconsolateness: this is the day, which all nations desired, and earnestly longed for, (with an implicit sense;) which the good patriarchs foreseeing did rejoice; which the prophets in so magnificent strains did predict and presignify. In our Lord's nativity all mankind was in a manner born, or did revive; was restored from a manifold necessity of dying; from lying dead in the guilt, and under the power of sin; from having our bodies irrecoverably dissolved by corruption, and our souls immersed into that second death of endless misery. It is in effect therefore the world's nativity that we celebrate, annexed to that of our Lord; the beginning of the new, better, spiritual, and eternal life to men: all reason therefore we have on this consideration heartily to rejoice; how extremely stupid and senseless are we, if the apprehension of goods so many, so excellent, hence accruing to us, doth not inspire our hearts with a grateful cheerfulness! 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXIV.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSE 20.

PRINCIPAL causes and ingredients of our Lord's incarnation.

I. It was the *Holy Ghost*, by the singular virtue and operation of whom the blessed Virgin did conceive; Joseph being only in outward esteem the father of our Saviour.

This matter of fact was well known to Joseph by revelation; to the virgin by her conscience; and by them it was attested to the holy Apostles; their attestation being seconded by the miracles of our Lord, and by the other potent arguments which confirm his doctrine: this enlarged on. The fact therefore being taken for granted, the particulars of it are considered.

1. The manner of that operation: this is expressed by the angel Gabriel, in terms so little intelligible by us, that they may well serve to bound our curiosity and check our inquiries. Rash and profane opinions of some sects considered: more becoming ideas of the holy Fathers stated.

2. Why was our Saviour conceived by the Holy Ghost? 1. It was needful for assuring his divinity, or his being the eternal Son of God; which was necessary, according to God's purposes, to the ancient predictions, and to the expectation of God's people. 2. This was the most fit way of accomplishing that so necessary conjunction of the divine and human nature: this topic enlarged on. 3. It being necessary that our Saviour should be consecrated to his great functions, and perfectly sanc-

tified in his person, as man, the efficacy of the Holy Spirit must needs intervene for this purpose. 4. It was needful that the human nature, which God did so advance, should be clear from all stain and pollution. 5. It was in like manner necessary that he who was ordained to appease God's displeasure, and to expiate all our offences, &c. should know no sin: from the Sanctifier therefore he derived his perfect sanctity. 6. We may add, the analogy, or apposite resemblance, between the conception of our Saviour for us, and his *formation in us:* this explained: which may be an admonition to us, to labor after this spiritual conception, &c. Proper application of this point.

II. The next head of discourse is the concurrence of the blessed Virgin in our Lord's generation; in which is comprehended, 1. his conception of her substance, whence he is called *the fruit of her womb*, &c.: 2. the nutrition, accretion, and intire conformation of his body out of her blood and substance, &c.: 3. his nativity itself—*she brought forth her first-born son.* These points enlarged on.

For our instruction and use we may consider him as born of her in three respects: he was born of her, as a *woman*, as a *virgin*, as *Mary*.

1. Our Saviour was born of her, as a *woman*. Error of the Valentinian hereties on this point exposed. We may easily conceive that God could immediately have created a nature like to ours, and have assumed it; but that would not have so fitly served the design of reconciling himself to us, and redeeming us: this fully explained. It was likewise seemly that the devil, who by the weakness of a woman had seduced man from his duty, should by the strength of one proceeding from a woman be overcome; according to the most ancient of all prophecies.

2. Our Lord was born of a *virgin*. So it was anciently presignified and predicted: this point enlarged on.

It was also decent and expedient that the tabernacle in which God resided should be proper, holy, and separate.

It was also most convenient for exciting due attention, for begetting faith, procuring reverence and admiration among men.

3. Moreover, our Saviour was born of *Mary;* of that singular person determined and described in the gospels; of her that was espoused to Joseph, &c.; who lived in Nazareth; who was *of the illustrious house and family of David.* Her lowly condition and personal qualifications enlarged on.

She was so related, for the declaration of God's truth, fidelity, and constancy, in accomplishing those ancient predictions and promises made to the Fathers.

She was thus duly qualified, to signify that God did not so much regard the outward pomp of this vain world, as the inward frame and temper of spirit. This is the reflexion which she herself made on the matter: Luke i. 51.

Such a person did the Son of God choose, to confer on her so eminent an honor; of all exterior honors the greatest ever granted to a mere creature.

It is said, of *exterior honors;* for our Lord himself teaches us to esteem spiritual advantages even above this great privilege: Matth. xii. 50. This topic enlarged on.

It may also be observed that our Saviour on other accounts willingly chose so mean a parentage; that thence he might have readier opportunity to undergo the greatest hardships incident to our nature; and to exemplify the most difficult virtues and duties.

That also the divine power and glory might appear more conspicuous through his low estate; that he might thus intimate the nature of his kingdom; and that he might thus discover to us wherein our happiness consists, and what is the true grandeur of man.

Finally, this relation of the blessed Virgin to our Lord

should not breed in us fond opinions or superstitious practices; but should beget a precious esteem and honorable memory of her. The groundless conceits, as well as dangerous and impious practices of the Roman church on this point, exposed. Conclusion.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary.

SERMON XXIV.

THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSE 20.

For that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.

If every circumstance of our Lord's wonderful incarnation deserveth to be considered, as affording matter of good instruction, and serving to excite devout affection; then surely the principal causes and ingredients thereof may demand a special regard from us: such are those which are couched in this text; the efficiency of the Holy Spirit, by which it was accomplished; the concurrence of the blessed Virgin Mary, as the subject in whom the divine virtue did work it: on which two particulars we shall reflect, in order.

I. It was the Holy Ghost, by the singular virtue and operation of whom, without intervention of any man, or earthly father, the blessed Virgin became impregnated and did conceive. Joseph was, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, in outward esteem, the father of our Saviour, (for, 'Is not this,' said they, 'the carpenter's son? Is not this the son of Joseph?') the modesty of his holy mother being preserved from misprision under the shroud of wedlock, during the time that by God's order the mystery and truth of things was to be concealed from general notice, until the day of his being showed and manifested to Israel; but God only was in truth his Father, his incarnation being performed by the

miraculous efficacy of God's Holy Spirit; on which account (beside his eternal generation) he was also the Son of God; for, 'Therefore,' said the angel to his mother, 'that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'

The matter of fact was well known to Joseph by revelation, and to the blessed Virgin herself by her conscience also; and by them it was attested to the holy Apostles; their attestation being seconded by the miracles of our Lord, together with all the potent arguments which confirm his doctrine: nor do we find that even the adversaries of our Lord did ever offer to impeach his parents of imposture, or did anywise trouble them about this report coming from them. And it is so clearly and fully affirmed in the gospels, that it is prodigiously strange that here have been lately some (called Josephites) who have questioned it, on weak pretences of discourse; whom we cannot otherwise consider than as intolerably audacious perverters of Scripture, or subverters of its authority and use; for surely nothing there can be deemed certain, if this point is not. The fact therefore we must take for granted; and for our farther instruction about it, we shall consider three particulars; the manner of it, the reasons for it, the practical use whereto it may be applied.

1. The manner of that operation, whereby the Holy Ghost did effect the human generation of our Lord, is by the archangel Gabriel expressed to be from 'the supervention of the Holy Ghost, and the divine power overshadowing the blessed Virgin;' the which words being of so general interpretation, and as to precise meaning so little intelligible by us, may well serve to bound our curiosity, and to check farther inquiry. Some indeed (as the followers of Valentinus and Apollinarius of old; as Menno, Servetus, and others of late) have been so bold as to determine that the Holy Ghost did bring from heaven a body, which he did convey into the blessed Virgin; or that our Saviour's flesh was formed of a divine seed, from the substance of God himself; or that in his conception the Holy Ghost did create and impart somewhat of matter; but it is enough to say that these are rash and groundless conceits; the holy Fathers, having weighed and discussed such imagina-

tions,* to prevent dangerous or misbecoming thoughts and speeches about a point of so sacred nature, more soberly do teach that our Saviour was conceived by the Holy Spirit, not σπερματικῶς, seminally; but δημιουργικῶς, operatively: οὐ διὰ συνουσίας, not by copulation; but διὰ δυνάμεως, by power; not *de substantia Spiritus Sancti*, of the substance of the Holy Ghost; but *de potentia*, by the virtue of it; and farther than this, say they, *Generationem ejus quis enarrabit?* Who can declare his generation, or exactly describe the manner of a performance so very wonderful and sublime; to the which no experience doth furnish any event like or comparable? When therefore it is said that the conception or generation was ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, of the Holy Ghost, the preposition ἐκ is to be taken for the same with ὑπὸ, or διὰ, (as it is very commonly used,) denoting, not matter out of which, but efficiency by which the effect was derived. But,

2. Why was our Saviour conceived by the Holy Ghost? Divers reasons for it may be assigned.

1. It was needful for assuring the divinity of our Saviour, or his being the eternal Son of God. That the Messias, the Redeemer of the world, should be the Son of God, was necessary, according to the purpose of God, the ancient predictions, the general opinions and expectations of God's people, (often implied in the gospels;) accordingly such he was as the coeternal Word in his divine nature; but it was requisite that he should also be such according to his human nature; that by his extraordinary generation, as man, his other more sublime generation (so much transcending human conceit) might be more credible, and the world might be convinced of his divinity; for men hardly would have been capable to believe him more than a man, whom they saw born in the common way of men: 'Is not this the son of Joseph?' was an argument which they urged against him, when he spake about his descent from heaven, John vi. 42. and caused them to admire, when they observed the power of his miracles (Matt. xiii. 55.) and the wisdom of his discourse, (Luke iv. 22.) but easily might they be induced

* Damaso. iii. 2. Just. Mart. Apol. 2. Aug. de Temp. Serm. vi. P. Leo de Nat. Serm.

to admit a mystery, which was countenanced by so grand a miracle as the birth of a child, by the divine power, without a father.

2. This was the most fit way of accomplishing that so necessary conjunction of the divine and human nature: a work of such grandeur and glory, of such grace and goodness, was not to be achieved by any other agent than by him, who is the substantial virtue and love of God; by whom we see all extraordinary and most eminent works to have been managed, to whom commonly the μεγαλεῖα Θεοῦ, the majestic and magnificent things of God are ascribed; for in the creation of the world, it was the Spirit of God which moved on the waters, forming things, and impregnating them with all kinds of life and vigor natural; he it is, to whom those signal works of Providence, the revelation of divine truth, the prediction of future events, the performance of miracles, the renovation of men's minds, and reformation of their manners, in a peculiar manner are attributed; so likewise to him this incomparably supernatural, glorious, and important act was most properly due.

3. It being necessary that our Saviour should be consecrated to his great functions, and perfectly sanctified in his person, as man; and those performances (according to the mystical economy of things among the divine Persons) being appropriated to the Holy Ghost, the natural spring of all derived sanctity; his efficacy must needs intervene to this purpose: if Jeremiah, St. John Baptist, and St. Paul, (persons designed for offices and employments in dignity, in consequence so far inferior,) were sanctified, and separated by the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb; in how more excellent kind and degree was it requisite that he should be sanctified thereby, who was sent into the world to redeem and purify it from all filth and fault? According to that saying of our Lord, 'Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?' whereas the style of gods was given to persons devoted to far meaner services.

4. It was needful that the human nature, which God did vouchsafe so highly to advance, by assuming it to a personal

conjunction and union with himself, should be clear from all stain and pollution; such as in ordinary propagation doth adhere to our sinful flesh and corrupt nature; that he whom God even as man would so dearly love, and so intirely be pleased with, should be void of the least inclination to iniquity or impurity; for, as the psalmist telleth us, 'God is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him;' he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot so much as look on iniquity; how then would he receive any defiled thing into so near an union, into so dear a regard, into so full a complacence? He therefore was to be thoroughly sanctified; and thence it was needful that his humanity should issue from the fountain of holiness, God's most holy Spirit.

5. It in like manner was necessary that he who was ordained to appease God's displeasure, and fully to reconcile him toward us, to expiate all our offences, thoroughly to redeem mankind from the guilt and from the power of sin; who with absolute authority was to teach, to exemplify, to command all righteousness, should himself 'know no sin:' 'Such an High Priest,' as the Apostle saith, 'became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; who had no need first to offer up sacrifices for his own sins:' the sacrifice expiatory for our offences was to be 'a lamb without blemish and without spot:' whence he was to be fully sanctified; and to become τὸ ἅγιον, 'that holy thing,' (absolutely,) as he was termed by the celestial messenger: whence from the source of sanctity, the Holy Ghost, whose proper name doth import holiness, whose proper work it is to sanctify, he was to derive a perfect sanctity and purity in his sacred conception.

6. We may add, as an observable point, the analogy, or apposite resemblance thereof, between the conception of our Saviour for us, and his formation in us; his natural generation and the spiritual regeneration of Christians; his becoming our brother in the flesh, and our being made his brethren in the Spirit; both being effected by the same agent: as Christ was made true man, and partaker of our nature, so we become true Christians, 'and consorts of the divine nature,' by the operation of the same divine Spirit: as he by the dispensation of God, so we by his grace 'are born, not by blood, nor by the

will of flesh, nor by the will of man, but of God;' hence doth accrue a new relation, and we become his brethren, not only as he was made like to us, but also as we become like to him; and are begotten of God, by the same heavenly virtue, the same incorruptible seed.

It may indeed be an admonition to us, to labor after this spiritual conception, which will render us conformable to our Lord, and far more truly allied to him, than even his partaking our nature hath done; and indeed without that spiritual one, this carnal alliance will not signify anything of benefit to us; it will little profit us that he was born in the flesh, if we are not born of the Spirit; without which generation 'we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

The proper application of this point is to engage us on a thankful adoration of the divine goodness and wisdom; so fully, so fitly carrying on that infinitely gracious work of our redemption; all the divine Persons of the blessed Trinity in a particular manner conspiring, as in the designation, so in the execution thereof; the Father mercifully destinating and sending his Son; the Son willingly and gladly condescending to come; the Holy Ghost effectually bringing him into the world; to which blessed Trinity therefore we should render all humble reverence and hearty praise: and so much for the first particular observed in the text.

II. The next is, the concurrence of the blessed Virgin Mary to our Lord's generation; 'that which is conceived (or generated) in her.'

The being generated (τὸ γεννᾶσθαι, here) we may suppose to respect or to express his whole human generation, with the parts and progress thereof; implying on the Virgin's part all that she as a mother did confer thereto; wherein therefore are comprehended the following particulars;

1. His conception of her substance, whence he is called 'the fruit of her womb;' and 'a rod' (that is, a branch, or twig) 'sprouting from the stem of Jesse;' and, 'Behold,' said the angel, 'thou shalt conceive in thy womb.'

2. The nutrition, accretion, and intire conformation of his body, out of her blood and substance; whence her womb is said to bear him, ('Blessed is the womb that bare thee,') to

have been gravidated, or great with child; the which as it grew did swell her womb visibly; so that she was found, or observed, by apparent signs, to be with child of him, or to have him in her womb.

3. His nativity itself, or exclusion into the open world; which is thus expressed by the Evangelist; 'The days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her firstborn son.'

Whatever therefore any mother doth confer to the intire production of a child, is to be attributed to the blessed Virgin; whence she was truly and properly 'the mother of our Lord,' and is accordingly often so called in the gospels; whence also she hath been in the Church defined to be and commonly styled θεοτόκος, the bearer and mother of God; that is, of him who is God; that term asserting the divinity of Christ and the unity of his person, [against Nestorius and his partizans;* who said that the Virgin was not properly θεοτόκος, but χριστοτόκος; and that he who was born was not God, but ἄνθρωπος θεοφόρος, a man carrying God, or divinity, in him.]

Now for our instruction and use we may resolve the word *her* into three respects distinctly considerable; he was born of her, a woman; he was born of her, a virgin; he was born of her, Mary; each of which respects is pregnant with matter observable: he was born of a woman, that was highly needful to be; of a virgin, that was very requisite; of Mary, that doth involve divers circumstances of importance.

1. Our Saviour was born of a woman.

The Valentinian heretics of old did opine that he was only born through a woman, or did merely pass through her, as liquor doth pass through a vessel; but that is a great error, for he was born in her, and of her; in our text it is ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν, 'generated in her;' which in sound expresseth no more than her containing him when conceived, but according to the force of the Hebrew particle ב (*be*) answering to ἐν here, is apt to signify more; and must be taken to do so in conformity to parallel expressions; as that of St. Paul, 'God sent forth his Son born ἐκ γυναικὸς, of a woman;' and that of St. Luke (in the best

* Nest. ad Cyrill. in Conc. Eph. Cyrill. Epist. ad Nest.

copies, followed by our English translators) τὸ γεννώμενον ἐκ σοῦ, The holy thing that is born of thee, or out of thee.

Indeed of a woman he was born, that is, from the matter and substance of a woman: so as thereby to bear the relation of a kinsman to us, becoming consanguineous to all mankind, which 'God did make of one blood;' whence 'he is not ashamed to call us brethren,' [and alloweth us to be 'of his flesh and of his bones.']

We may easily conceive that God could immediately have created a nature in kind and properties like to ours, and have assumed it; but that would not have so fitly served the design of reconciling himself to us, and redeeming us; to the effecting that in the most congruous way, not only a resemblance in nature, but a cognation and proximity in blood was needful, or at least was very convenient and suitable: for our blood being tainted, our whole stock having forfeited its dignity and estate by the rebellious disloyalty of our common ancestors, it was expedient that it should be purged and restored by the satisfactory merit and acceptable fidelity of one who was of our race and kindred. We being to be adopted and received into God's family, it was proper that business should be transacted by intervention of a common relation; according to the discourse of St. Paul, 'God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those that were under the law,' (that according to the obligation undertaken by him, he performing the obedience required by the law, might redeem those who, being tied to obey the law, had yet transgressed it,) ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν,' 'that (it followeth) we might receive the adoption;' that is, that we by virtue and in consequence of that birth from a woman, and of that obedience to the law performed by our brother, might be in capacity to receive the quality or state of sons to God.

It was likewise seemly that the devil, who by the weakness of a woman had seduced man from his duty to God, had overthrown, triumphed over, and captivated God's creature, in just amends, for the reparation of God's honor, and our consolation, should by the strength and faithful constancy of one, proceeding from a woman, be himself defeated and debased; according to the mystical intent of that most ancient pro-

phecy or promise, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head;' of the woman, the man is not mentioned; for,

2. Our Lord was born of a virgin: so it was anciently presignified and predicted; 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a son;' a virgin; *Almah*, ἀπόκρυφος, (so Aquila, with respect to the derivation of the word, did render it,) that is, a recluse; one who perhaps had seldom seen, who never had known a man.

This, it seemeth, was that new thing (that most strange and admirable thing) which God in the prophet Jeremiah did foreshow that he would create in the earth, and which should then happen, when he would restore Zion, and establish a new covenant with his people; namely, 'a woman shall compass a man;' a woman in a manner extraordinary, without the concourse of a male, should conceive, and inclose in her womb a man; that very man who should accomplish the great matters there predicted and promised. So it was, and so on divers accounts it was requisite that it should be.

For how otherwise apparently, to the sense and satisfaction of all men, could he be that which (according to ancient prophecies and common expectation, as also according to the exigency of things, and the tenor of divine purposes) he ought to be, both the Son of God and the Son of man, otherwise than by coming of a virgin? He must be born of a woman, that he might truly be the Son of man; he must be born of a virgin that he might be clearly the Son of God; how otherwise could there be an effectual conviction of his divine original?

It was also decent and expedient that the tabernacle in which God should reside and dwell, should be proper and inclosed; that the temple of the divinity should be holy and separate; that the soil whence holiness itself would sprout forth, should be clear and pure from all sordid mixtures; that none should presume to touch the border of that holy mountain where God so specially would manifest himself; that the lust of man should not approach that place whence the glory of God would so illustriously shine forth.

It was also most convenient for exciting due attention and regard, for begetting faith, for procuring reverence and admira-

tion in men, that our Redeemer should enter on the world in a manner so peculiar and miraculous: for who that heareth of such an event can forbear to mind it, and ponder on it? who can doubt him to be the Son of God, whom by sufficient and certain attestation he learneth to have been conceived without any concurrence of man? who will not readily defer high veneration to him who appeareth in a manner so glorious and supernatural?

3. Moreover our Saviour was born of Mary; of that singular person determined and described in the gospels; of her that was espoused to and did live with Joseph; with Joseph the carpenter; who was born in the town of Bethlehem, who lived in the city of Nazareth in Galilee; who both according to natural and legal extraction was descended in a direct lineage from king David, being, as St. Luke saith, 'of the house and family of David,' and who by consequence did lineally come from Abraham. She herself was also of the same stock and family; as may be collected from circumstances intimated in the story, and certainly may be deduced from the prophecies concerning our Saviour's stock, with the assertions implying their accomplishment.

Of Mary therefore, by blood and progeny a princess, extracted from the most illustrious stem on earth; not only famous among men, but (which is infinitely more) especially dear to God; who yet in external condition was very mean and poor, living obscurely in habitation with an artisan, of a painful and not gainful trade.

As for her personal qualifications, they were excellently worthy; for in disposition of mind she was very religious and devout toward God; in the temper of her spirit, very sweet and calm, very modest, meek, and humble; such the passages occurring in the gospels concerning her do show her to have been; such particularly that most excellent hymn ejaculated by her (wherein we may discover a spirit ravished with the most sprightly devotion imaginable; a devotion full of ardent love, of humble thankfulness, of hearty joy, tempered with most submissive reverence) demonstrateth her to have been.

Of a mother so related and so qualified, our Saviour was born; both which points was requisite.

She was so related for the declaration of God's truth, fidelity, and constancy, in accomplishing those ancient predictions and promises made to the Fathers; to Abraham, that 'in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed;' to David, that 'of the fruit of his loins God would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;' concerning whom, as by many passages in the gospel it appeareth, God's people had a general expectation and persuasion that he should be 'the rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch growing out of his roots;' 'in whom the horn of David should bud;' who 'should raise the tabernacle of David that was fallen, and rule over the kingdom of Jacob for ever:' and that our Lord should be born at Bethlehem, that he should be called a Nazarene, were circumstances touched in the prophets, for the verification whereof it was needful that the mother of our Lord should be thus related.

She was also to be so duly qualified, as to her state and mind; being homely in state of life, and holy in disposition of mind; to signify that God did not so much regard the outward pomps and appearances of this vain world, as the inward frame and temper of spirit.

It is indeed no small disparagement to those empty glories, which men are wont so hugely to admire, and it may be a strong inducement to a moderate esteem of them, if we consider it, that God did not choose for the mother of his Son, and Saviour of mankind, a visibly great princess, or any to appearance honorable, splendid, or wealthy personage; but her that was espoused to a mechanic artificer, her that was only rich in grace, and decked with interior endowments; 'adorned (after the garb which St. Peter recommendeth to women) with the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible purity of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.' This is the reflexion which she herself did make on the matter; for this 'her soul did magnify God, because he had regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; he had showed strength with his arm, he had scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he had put down the mighty from their seat, and had exalted the humble and meek; he had filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he had sent empty away.' This showeth the extreme folly of contemning the poor, to whom

commonly God expresseth so special regard, who are capable of so high favors, who have so glorious consorts of their state.

Such a person did the Son of God choose to bear himself, to bear duty unto, to confer that special favor and eminent honor on; an honor, among all exterior honors the highest that ever was vouchsafed to any of human kind, or indeed to any mere creature.

I say of exterior honors; for spiritual advantages our Lord himself doth teach us in our esteem to prefer above this great privilege; they being *toto genere*, superior, and placing us in a nobler relation to him than this; 'Whosoever,' saith he, 'shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother;' the same in a more excellent manner and sublime degree is allied, is endeared to me, that he can be on the score of any carnal kindred: the conformity to him in our mind and affections doth render us nearer to him than any cognation of blood; the having him formed in our hearts is more considerable than the bearing of him in the womb.

Indeed, the mother of our Lord herself, although as such she was κεχαριτωμένη, especially favored and graced, and blessed among women; although on that account all nations must esteem and call her blessed; although worthily she did in that respect acknowlege that God had done μεγαλεῖα, magnificent and mighty things for her; yet really, in just esteem, to have Christ born in her soul, to have participated of his divine grace and presence in her heart, the Holy Ghost's having produced a spiritual birth of holy dispositions in her, was a nobler honor and a truer happiness than that; 'neither would it,' as St. Chrysostom saith,* 'have been anywise profitable to her, if she had not been virtuous, to bear Christ in her womb, or to bring forth that admirable birth;' this our Saviour plainly declared, whenas a good woman, transported by the ravishing excellency of his discourse, did cry out, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee,' he thence took occasion to say, 'Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.'

* Chrys. in Matt. xii. 50.

We might also here farther observe that our Saviour on other good accounts willingly did choose so mean a parentage; namely,

That he thence might have readier opportunity to undergo and taste the greatest inconveniences and hardships incident to our nature, thereby more fully meriting and suffering for us.

That he might have occasion to exemplify the most difficult virtues and duties, (humility, meekness, patience, contentedness,) showing us how we should virtuously comport with the lowest state; how we should cheerfully sustain wants, labors, pains, and disgraces; how we should contentedly be destitute of all the glories, riches, and pleasures of this world.

That also the divine power and glory might appear more conspicuously through his worldly state of impotency and baseness.

That he might insinuate the nature of his kingdom not to consist in secular pomp and puissance, but in spiritual power over the hearts of men.

That he might discover wherein our happiness doth consist; how little any thing, which is high in vulgar esteem of men, is an ingredient thereof: and what is the true grandeur of a man; not his outward garb and retinue, but his inward virtue and goodness.

Finally, this relation of the blessed Virgin to our Lord, as it should beget a precious esteem and honorable memory of her, (for let that mouth be cursed which will not call her blessed, let the name of him be branded with everlasting reproach of folly, who will not prefer her in dignity before any queen or empress,) so it should not serve to breed in us fond opinions, or to ground superstitious practices in regard to her, as it hath happened to do among divers sorts of Christians; especially among the adherents to Rome. For,

They (out of a wanton mind, but in effect profanely and sacrilegiously) have attributed to her divers swelling and vain names, divers scandalously unsavory, some hideously blasphemous, titles and elogies, as alluding to, so intrenching on, the incommunicable prerogatives of God Almighty and of our blessed Saviour; such as the Queen of Heaven,

the Health of the World, the Mother of Mercies, the Spouse of God, Our Lady, (as if, beside our *unus Dominus*, there were *una Domina* in the church, forgotten by St. Paul,) with the like.

They ascribe to her the most sublime attributes of God, together with his most peculiar actions of providence and protection over us, yea of redemption itself.

They yield acts of religious veneration (prayer and praise) to her, and those in a very high manner and strain; professing not only to serve her religiously, (which the holy Scripture chargeth us to do in regard to God and him only,) but ὑπερδουλεύειν, to do more than serve her, or to serve her with exceeding devotion.

Who commonly do at the end of their works join, 'Praise be to God and to the blessed Virgin;' as if she were to share with God in the glory and gratitude due for blessing or success on our performances.

All this they do, without any plain reason, any plausible authority, any ancient example, yea manfestly enough against the best reason, the commands of God, the doctrine and practice of the primitive church, all which do conspire in appropriating religious adoration to God alone; neither the holy Scripture nor the first Fathers excepting the blessed Virgin from the general rule, or taking notice of her as an object of our worship, but nipping the first essays of such a superstition in the Collyridians.

Such groundless and foolish conceits, such dangerous and impious practices, we should carefully beware; the which, as they much derogate from God's honor, and prejudice his service, and thwart his commands, so they indeed do rather greatly discredit, injure, and abuse the blessed Virgin, (making her name accessory to such enormous scandals,) than they do bring any honor, or do any right to her.

And I doubt not, but, εἴ τις αἴσθησις, if she from her seat of bliss doth behold these perverse services, or absurd flatteries of her, she with holy regret and disdain doth distaste, loathe, disdain, and reject them; with a *Non nobis Domine*, Psal. 115. 'Not unto us, O Lord;' and with the angel in the Apocalypse, Ὅρα μὴ, 'See thou do it not.'

Whose greater honor it was, in truth, to be a meek and humble servant, than to be the mother of her Lord and Saviour; it is the chief and truest honor we can do her, to esteem her great modesty and humility, to imitate her piety and grace, after her pattern conscientiously to reverence and obey her Son; unto whom therefore let us with hearty thankfulness render all glory and praise. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXV.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. I.—VERSE 23.

THE doctrine of the gospel is called the *word of the cross;* that is, a report concerning our Lord's crucifixion, with a declaration of its ends, effects, and uses. This main point was difficult to all professors of Christianity. To the Jews it was a stumbling-block; the Pagans took it for an extravagantly foolish conceit; but on those who by divine grace did rightly apprehend and receive it, it had the most beneficial influence; proving unto them *the power of God to salvation*, &c. On this point therefore the holy Apostles, in their preaching, chiefly insisted, according to the words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 2.

It is therefore a most profitable subject of meditation at the time when our Lord's Passion is commemorated in the church, and may be contemplated with several notable adjuncts: these enumerated.

I. We may consider it as a suffering, in appearance criminal; a seeming execution of justice on our Lord, as a malefactor; *being* (as the prophet foretold) *numbered with the transgressors:* this point enlarged on.

But since any death or passion of our Lord (so very precious and valuable as it must have been in the sight of God) might have been sufficient for the accomplishment of his great design, it may be inquired why God should thus expose and subject him to so shameful a death? To answer this some reasons are given, which are intimated in the Scriptures, or which bear a conformity to Scriptural doctrine.

1. As our Saviour did freely undertake a life of greatest

meanness and hardship, so on the like accounts he might be pleased to undergo the bitterest of deaths: had he died in any other way, he had not been so complete a sufferer, nor tasted the worst of what men can do or endure: there had been a comfort in seeming innocent, which would have impaired the perfection of his undertaking. This kind of death he foresaw, and plainly aimed at it with satisfaction: Matth. xvi. 21. Mark ix. 12. &c.

2. Again, death passing on him as a malefactor, by public judgment, did best suit the nature of his undertaking; was most congruous with his design in suffering; and did best imply the reason of it. We were all guilty in the highest degree, and deserved an exemplary condemnation: this topic enlarged on.

3. Seeing it was determined that our Lord should die for us, and that in a violent manner, so as perfectly to satisfy God's justice, vindicate his honor, and evidence his indignation against our sins, it was fit he should so endure death, that it might be most apparent that God did exact and inflict punishment on him, and that he did submissively undergo it. *All judgment*, says Moses, *is God's*. It was therefore in our Saviour a signal act of submission to his authority and justice, becoming the character which he sustained of our proxy and redeemer: this head enlarged on.

4. In fine, our Saviour perhaps in no other way, with such advantage, could have displayed all kinds of virtue and goodness, to the honor of God and the furtherance of our benefit, as in this. The judgment-hall, the passages leading thither, the place of execution crowded with witnesses, were like so many theatres on which he might, in the face of men, act divers parts of the sublimest virtue: these enumerated. Conclusion.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate.

SERMON XXV.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. I.—VERSE 23.

But we preach Christ crucified.

THE doctrine of the gospel is called 'the word of the cross;'* that is, a report concerning our Lord's crucifixion, together with a declaration of the ends, effects, and uses of it; this being a special and main point therein, whereto all the rest are closely allied, and whereon the whole method of our salvation dependeth; a point which (as St. Paul in this and in several other places doth acquaint us) of all others did find the hardest entertainment among all sorts of people, to whom it was addressed; few auditors being disposed to swallow it, or able to digest it. The Jews were much offended that one who suffered by their hands in so vile and wretched a manner should be propounded to them as their Messias and King; the same who, according to their opinions and hopes, (grounded on their ancient prophecies plausibly interpreted, and on their constant traditions,) was destined to restore them from their afflicted condition, and to rear them into a high state of prosperity. The Pagans took it for an extravagantly foolish conceit, that a person of so mean a quality and so miserable a fortune, should be such as was told them, the son of God, and Lord of all things, the author of happiness, and the object of highest adoration to all men; very absurd and abominable this proposition did generally seem to the carnal and worldly prejudices of men, who little could understand, and less would consider

* Λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ. 1 Cor. i. 18.

the sublime design thereof; but to those who (being endued with a meek heart, and enlightened by divine grace) did rightly apprehend and duly weigh it, it did afford great satisfaction and comfort; it had on them a most effectual and beneficial influence; proving indeed unto them 'the power of God to salvation;' as raising in them strong hopes of salvation, and engaging them in a practice conducible thereto. On this point therefore our Lord's ambassadors, the holy Apostles, in their preaching chiefly did insist, declaring the great ends and excellent fruits of our blessed Saviour's crucifixion; according to that of St. Paul, 'I determine to know nothing among you save Christ, and him crucified.'

It is therefore questionless a most profitable, and ever (especially now, when our Lord's passion is by the church solemnly commemorated) very seasonable subject of our meditation; apt to excite good thoughts, good affections, and good resolutions in us; and as such I mean now to recommend and apply it; endeavoring to assist your meditation by suggesting some remarkable particulars concerning it; and in my discourse I shall not so much generally consider the death and passion of our Lord, as the particular manner and kind thereof, by crucifixion; the which we may contemplate, as qualified with divers notable adjuncts; namely, 1. As a suffering in appearance criminal. 2. As most bitter and painful. 3. As most ignominious and shameful. 4. As agreeable and advantageous to the intents of his passion. 5. As completory of ancient presignifications and predictions. 6. As apt to excite devotion in us, and to enforce on us the practice of our duty.

I. Let us consider it as a suffering in appearance criminal; or a seeming execution of justice on our Lord, as a malefactor; 'He was,' as the prophet foretold, 'numbered among the transgressors;' and, 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'made him sin for us, who knew no sin;' that is, God ordered him to be dealt with as an exceedingly sinful or criminous person, who in himself was perfectly innocent, and void of the least tendency to any fault: so in effect it was, that he was impeached of the highest crimes, not only as a violator of the divine law, in breaking the sabbath, in keeping bad company, and holding an over free conversation; but as an impostor, deluding and

seducing the people; as a blasphemer, assuming to himself the properties and prerogatives of God; as a seditious and rebellious person, 'perverting the nation,' forbidding the payments of tribute to Cæsar, usurping royal authority, and pretending to be 'Christ a King;' in general, as a κακοποιὸς, a malefactor, or one guilty of notable crimes; so his prosecutors (in the gospel) did affirm; 'If,' said they to Pilate, 'he were not a malefactor, we should not have delivered him up unto thee:' as such he was represented and arraigned; and that, although by a sentence wrested from the judge against his conscience, by the malicious importunity of his accusers, he was condemned, and in pretence suffered as such, is clear, and admitted by all.

Now whereas any death or passion of our Lord (as being in itself infinitely valuable, and most precious in the sight of God) might have been sufficient toward the accomplishing the general designs of his passion, the expiation of our guilt, the appeasement of God's wrath, the satisfaction of divine justice; it might be inquired why God should so expose him, and why he should choose to suffer under this odious and ugly character: to satisfy this demand, and that we may the more admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this great dispensation, divers reasons may be assigned, which are intimated in holy Scripture, or bear a conformity to its doctrine, why it was so ordered. For,

1. As our Saviour freely did undertake a life of greatest meanness and hardship, so on the like accounts he might be pleased to undergo a death, of all most bitter and uncomfortable: there is nothing to man's nature (especially to honest and ingenuous nature, wherein natural modesty is not extinct) more abominable than such a death: God for good purposes hath planted in our constitution a lively sense of disgrace; and of all disgraces that which proceedeth from an imputation of heinous crimes is most disgustful and pungent; and being conscious of our innocence, doth increase the smart; and to reflect on ourselves dying under it, or leaving the world with an indelible stain on our name and memory, is yet more grievous; even to languish by degrees, enduring the torments of a long, however sharp disease, would, to any ingenuous person, be far

more eligible than in this manner (of being reputed and treated as a villain) to find a quick and easy dispatch; some touch of which resentment we may conceive breaking forth in our Lord, and somewhat of man's nature discovering itself in that question; 'Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?' He did, it seems, as a man, loathe to be prosecuted as a thief; yet he willingly chose it; as he purposely did embrace other the worst of distasteful things belonging to our nature, and incident to that lowly condition, into which he did put himself, (not only 'being made in the likeness of man, but taking the form of a servant;') to endure want, and to fare hardly; to be slighted, envied, hated, scorned, and reproached through the whole course of his life. Had he died in any other way, he had not been so complete a sufferer, nor had tasted the worst of what men can and do endure; there had been a comfort in seeming innocent, which had impaired the perfection of his undertaking. Often was he in danger of death, both from the close machinations, and from the open violences of those who maligned him; but he industriously declined a death so easy and so honorable, if I may so speak; it not being so disgraceful to fall by private malice or by sudden rage, as by the solemn and deliberate proceeding of persons in public authority and great credit.

This kind of death he did foresee, and plainly with satisfaction did aim at; he (as we have it related in the gospels) did show his disciples that it was incumbent on him (by God's appointment and his own choice) ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ παθεῖν, 'that he ought to suffer many things;' to be reprobated by the chief priests, elders, and scribes; 'to be vilified by them;' to be 'condemned, and delivered up to the Gentiles,' εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι, 'to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified;' as a most flagitious slave.

Thus would our Saviour, in conformity to all the rest of his voluntary afflictions, and for a consummation of them, not only suffer in his body by sore bruises and wounds, in his soul by the bitterest sorrows and agonies; but in his name also and reputation by the foulest scandals; undergoing as well all the infamy, as the infirmity which did belong unto us, or could befall us; thus meaning by all means to express his charity, and

exercise his compassion toward us; thus advancing his merit, and yielding the utmost satisfaction to justice in our behalf. Again,

2. Death passing on him as a malefactor by public judgment, did best suit to the nature of his undertaking, was most congruous to his design in suffering, did most aptly represent what he was doing, and imply the reason of his performance. We all were guilty in a most high degree; we deserved an exemplary condemnation; the sharpest pain, together with the greatest shame, was due to us, for our unworthy offending our most great and our most good Lord and Maker; he did undertake in our stead to bear all this, and fully to satisfy for us; he therefore underwent the like judgment and punishment, being reputed, being termed, being treated as we should have been, in quality of a notorious malefactor, as we in truth are. What we really had acted in dishonoring and usurping on God, in disordering and troubling the world, in deceiving and perverting others, (by our negligent mistakes and our presumptuous miscarriages; by our evil practices and contagious examples,) that was imputed to him, and avenged on him; 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' he therefore did not only sustain an equivalent punishment, but in a sort did bear an equal blame with us before God and man. Farther,

3. Seeing it was determined that our Lord should die for us, and that not in a natural but violent manner, so as perfectly to satisfy God's justice, to vindicate his honor, and to evidence his indignation against our sins; it was most fit that he should perform it in that way, wherein God's right is most nearly concerned, and his providence most discernible; wherein it should be most apparent that God did exact and inflict punishment on him, that he did yield unto it, and submissively undergo it. 'All judgment,' as Moses said in his charge, 'is God's;' or is administered in his name, by authority derived from him; all magistrates being his officers and instruments, by whom he governeth and ordereth the world, his kingdom; whence that which is done in way of formal judgment by persons in authority, God himself may be supposed in a more special and im-

mediate manner to execute it, as being done by his commission, in his stead, on his behalf; with his peculiar superintendence and guidance: it was therefore in our Saviour a signal act of submission to God's authority and justice, becoming the person which he sustained, of our proxy and redeemer, to undergo such a judgment, and such a punishment; whereby he received a doom, as it were, from God's own mouth, uttered by his ministers; and bare the stroke of justice from God's hand, represented by his instruments; wherefore very seasonably and pertinently did he reply to Pilate, avowing his authority under God in those words, 'Thou hadst no power over me,' (or against me,) 'except it were given thee from above;' implying, in was in regard to that originally supreme authority of God his Father, and to his particular appointment on that occasion, that our Saviour did then freely subject himself to those inferior and subordinate powers, as to the proper ministers of divine justice; had he suffered in any other way, by any private malice or passion of men, God's special providence in that case had been less visible, and Christ's obedience not so remarkable; and if he must die by public hands, it must be as a criminal, under a pretence of guilt and demerit; there must be a formal process, how full soever of mockery and outrage; there must be testimonies produced, however false and groundless; there must be a sentence pronounced, although most partial and corrupt; for no man is persecuted by authority without some color of desert; otherwise it would cease to be public authority, and become private violence; the prosecutor then would put off the face of a magistrate, and appear as a murderer, or a thief.

4. In fine, our Saviour perhaps in no other way, with such advantage, could have displayed all kinds of virtue and goodness, to the honor of God, and the furtherance of our benefit, as in this: the judgment-hall, with all the passages leading him thither, and from thence to execution, attended on by guards of soldiers, among the crowds and clamors of the people, were as so many theatres, on which he had opportune convenience visibly, in the eye of the world, to act divers parts of sublimest virtue; to express his insuperable constancy in attesting truth and maintaining a good conscience, his meekness

in calmly bearing the greatest wrongs, his patience in contentedly enduring the saddest adversities; his intire resignation to the will and providence of God; his peaceable submission to the law and power of man; his admirable charity in pitying, in excusing, in obliging those, by his good wishes and earnest prayers for their pardon, who in a manner so injurious, so despiteful, so cruel, did persecute him; yea in willingly suffering all this for their salvation: all these excellent virtues and graces, by the matter being thus ordered, were in a degree most eminent, and in a manner very conspicuous, demonstrated to the praise of God's name, and the advancement of his truth; for the settlement of our faith and hope; for an instruction and encouragement of good practice to us. On such considerations it might be expedient that he should suffer in this kind as a criminal.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXVI.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. I.—VERSE 23.

It is added in the Creed, *under Pontius Pilate*, ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου: now ἐπὶ may mean either in the time of Pilate, or under him as president and judge; both senses, in this case, seem intended: it may be useful then to consider the *time when*, the person *under whom*, and consequently the *place where*, and the *manner how*, he suffered.

1. The *time*, in itself most fit and agreeable to divine predictions, illustrates the wisdom of God in his providence, whilst it confirms his veracity, his constancy, and his fidelity: these points enlarged on. This time was fit to be set down, to exclude all confusion and uncertainty about the history.

2. As for the *person*, in all respects something is remarkable about him: 1. as a Roman, and therefore an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; so that both Jews and Gentiles conspired against their common Saviour; that so in type and mystery it might be signified how the sins of all men did jointly bring him to his death; and consequently his own immense goodness be demonstrated; &c. 2. A *stranger* also was proper, as apt to be a fairer judge, on our Saviour's trial, for vindication of his personal innocence; &c. 3. If we consider Pilate as a governor and judge, we may therein see the wisdom and special providence of God, punishing our Saviour by his own officer in a course of justice; and the loyal obedience of Christ, submitting both to God and man; &c. 4. As for Pilate's personal qualities, history declares him to have been harsh and

wilful, violent, rapacious, and cruel, &c.: yet, in comparison with the furious Jews, he behaved himself moderately and ingenuously; and though his character led him to consent to their iniquity, yet he in fact condemned them, condemned himself, and absolved the accused person, though he took away his life; affording a testimony of his innocence sufficient to overthrow all Jewish slanders, and to confirm our faith.

3. The name of Pontius Pilate intimates the *place* of our Saviour's passion; he being well known to have been at that time governor of Judea, and to have resided in Jerusalem: this shown to accord with prophecy; &c.

The rest of the particulars proposed in the last discourse are now resumed.

II. We may consider that our Saviour's sufferings were most bitter and painful: these enumerated; &c. But as the case was so hard and sad, so the reason thereof was great, and the fruit answerably excellent. He thus demonstrated his exceeding love for us, and signified the heinousness of our sins: he yielded the most valuable compensation for the tortures which we should have endured, and he thoroughly exemplified the hardest duties of patience and obedience.

III. We may consider this sort of punishment as a *servile punishment*, inflicted not on freemen, but only on *slaves*, or people scarcely regarded as men.

To be so raised up on high is to provoke contempt, scorn, and obloquy; to draw forth the language of derision, &c. Thus was the prediction in the Psalm verified, *I am a reproach of men*; &c. Thus did our Saviour *endure the cross, despising the shame*; and thus he *became*, as the Apostle says, *a curse for us*; making himself *of no reputation*, that we, together with life and liberty, might recover also that honor which we had forfeited.

The peculiar sufferings of our Lord dilated on: in order that

no one may be tempted to undervalue them, or to compare them with the sufferings of other virtuous men; as Celsus compared them with those of Anaxarchus and Epictetus. The intensity of our Lord's sufferings shown from the frame and temper of his human nature, so sensibly affected with the pain and shame, and all the other evils apparently waiting on his passion.

IV. We may consider that this way of suffering had in it some particular advantages conducive to the accomplishment of our Lord's principal design.

Its being very notorious, and its lasting a competent time, were such, in the confirmation of our faith, in the conviction of infidelity, in the exhibition of his patient deportment. As he lived, so he died, publicly and visibly; the world being witness of his death, and so prepared to believe his resurrection, and embrace his doctrine; &c.

Another advantage was, that by it the nature of Christ's kingdom might be evidently signified; that it was not such an one as carnal people expected, but purely spiritual, &c. It was thus a touchstone to prove men's dispositions; &c.

Another was, that by it God's special providence was discovered, and his glory illustrated, in the propagation of the gospel: *when the stone which the builders*, with so much scorn, *refused, should become the head of the corner*, we might with good assurance say, *this is the Lord's doing*.

Again, looking to his posture on the cross, we may, with many devout Fathers, consider it full of many instructive and admonitory *emblems:* these enumerated.

V. We may, to confirm our faith, &c. observe the correspondency of this manner of suffering with the ancient prophecies and types foreshowing it: enumeration of such prophecies: enumeration of such types; particularly that of the Paschal Lamb.

VI. The consideration of this suffering is very applicable to our practice; being most apt both to instruct and to affect us.

1. How can it otherwise than inflame our hearts with love towards our Lord, to think what intensity of pain and shame he underwent for us?

2. How can reflexion on this case do otherwise than work in us a hearty gratitude? This enlarged on.

3. What surer ground of faith in God, what stronger encouragement of hope can there be, than this?

4. What greater engagement can there be to obedience; and what can produce a greater detestation of sin?

5. What in reason can be more powerful to the breeding within us remorse and penitent sorrow?

6. If ingenuousness of disposition will not so operate and melt us to contrition, yet surely this consideration must produce some salutary *fear* in us: this enlarged on.

7. How can it but greatly deter us from the wilful commission of sin, to consider that by it we do, as the Apostle teaches, *re-crucify the Son of God*, and again *expose him to open shame*; &c.

8. It may yield great consolation and joy to us, to contemplate our merciful and kind Lord on the cross, thus transacting our redemption, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a glorious conqueror: this topic enlarged on.

9. This consideration is also a strong inducement to the practice of charity towards our neighbor; for whom, as well as for ourselves, our Lord underwent such sufferings.

10. Farthermore, what can operate more towards breeding a disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous delights? &c.

11. It is surely a great commendation of afflictions, and a strong consolation under them, to ponder well this point; for if hardship was to our Lord a school of duty, &c., and a step unto

glory, how much greater reason have we to undergo tribulations! This enlarged on.

12. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross is indeed the express condition, and the proper character of our Christianity. Let it be *to the Jews a scandal;* let it be *folly to the Greeks;* let it appear scandalous, distasteful, strange, or incredible, to any persons of carnal or prejudiced minds; yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; *a faithful proposition, worthy of all acceptation;* &c. This topic enlarged on. Conclusion.

Was crucified.

SERMON XXVI.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. I.—VERSE 23.

But we preach Christ crucified.

It is added in the Creed, under Pontius Pilate; ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου; in which words the preposition ἐπὶ may either denote the circumstance of time, when our Saviour's passion did happen; in the time of Pontius Pilate's government, or presidency over Judea; so the word ἐπὶ is very frequently used: or it may also farther imply a respect to that person, as an instrument of our Saviour's passion; so that it might also be rendered, by, or under, Pontius Pilate, as president and judge: thus is the word sometimes used, (as for instance, where in the gospel it is said, ἐὰν ἀκουσθῇ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος, if this be heard by the governor, or, if it come to the governor's ear, as it is rendered in our translation.) Neither of these senses were, I suppose, distinctly, but both rather conjunctly intended here; in relation to the evangelical history; the which (as to the main obvious passages) we are here supposed to know, and do profess to believe; neither do I think any thing more of mystery designed here beyond the full and clear determination of our Saviour's person; or the declaration of whom we do believe in by circumstances most apt and suitable to that purpose; the time when, the person under whom, and consequently the place where, and manner how he suffered. However all these circumstances are in themselves considerable, and afford some matter of edification to our faith and practice: let us therefore touch them.

1. The time, in itself most fit, and most agreeable to divine

predictions, doth illustrate the wisdom of God in his providence, doth confirm his veracity, his constancy, and his fidelity: for when the fulness of time was come; when the sceptre of legislation and sovereign authority was just departed from Judah; while the Jewish temple did stand, but was shortly to be destroyed; before the Jews were utterly unsettled and dispersed; when the seventy hebdomades (of years) were near expiring, the time when the 'Messias should be cut off;' when Judaism was by numerous accession of proselytes diffused over the world, the sacred writings being translated, and legible everywhere; when the world was in the most general peace and deepest calm, consequently men's attention being then more ready, and their minds more capable of instruction and persuasion concerning divine truths; when the most considerable part of the world was united under one empire, (or under two, that of the Romans, and that of the Parthians,) and thence more fit to be incorporated into a spiritual commonwealth, (to communicate in offices of piety, to impart and receive instruction;) when mankind by learning and policy was generally better civilised than ever, more inquisitive after knowlege, and more receptive of truth; when, in short, all things were duly prepared and suited for the great effects designed by God to proceed from our Saviour's passion, and other performances, then did he suffer and do what God had in his wisdom and goodness predetermined, presignified, and predicted. I might add, that the time was fit to be set down, as a character apt to confirm the truth of the history; for direction to a fair inquiry and trial concerning it; to exclude all confusion and uncertainty about it.

2. As for the person under whom our Lord suffered; if we consider him as a Roman stranger, (or Gentile,) or as governor and judge; or with regard to his personal qualities; or according to his deportment in this affair; something in all these respects may present itself observable by us.

He was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; so Jews and Gentiles conspired in violence and injury against their common Saviour; that so in type and mystery it might be signified how the sins of all men did jointly bring him to his death; 'that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world might become

guilty before God.' Neither was it for nothing decreed by God, that the Jews should (as our Saviour foretold) deliver him up (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) to the Gentiles, 'to mock, and scourge, and crucify him.' The Jews out of envy and malice delivered him up, accused and prosecuted him, instigated and importuned against him; the Gentiles, out of ignorance, profaneness, and unjust partiality, condemned and executed him; whereby the ingratitude, iniquity, and impiety of all mankind did in some sort appear, and was aptly represented; and consequently his immense goodness is demonstrated, who for so impious, unjust, and flagitious a generation, for so malicious enemies, for so cruel persecutors of himself, did willingly suffer: them, who so combined in mischief against him, he then designed to conjoin in reconciliation to God, and in mutual peace and charity toward one another; 'reconciling both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.'

A stranger also was proper for the management of this affair, as apt to be a more fair and indifferent judge; doing what was designed and fit to be done in our Saviour's trial, for vindication of his personal innocence, and declaration of the iniquity practised against him.

Again, if we consider Pilate as a governor and judge, (for so he was, Cæsar's procurator, and president of Judea, ἐπίτροπος, and ἡγεμὼν he is called;) we therein may discern the wisdom and special providence of God; punishing our Saviour for us by his own officer in a course of justice; the loyal obedience of our Saviour submitting both to God and to man, although in a case of plain outrage and highest injustice against himself; the heinousness of that wicked proceeding, wherein that sacred power committed by God to men, and the venerable name of justice were so abused; for if ever, then one might have said with the preacher, 'I saw the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.'

As for Pilate's personal qualities; he is by the historians writing near those times reported to have been a man of a harsh and rough temper; wilful and haughty in spirit; violent, rapacious, and cruel in his proceedings; and was therefore a proper instrument of providence for execution of such a busi-

ness; so holy and gracious in God's purpose, so villanous and barbarous according to man's intention; such a person deserved to bear the guilt of a fact so execrably base; was worthy to be employed therein, and ready enough to undergo it: it had not in itself been so plausible that such an act should, nor so credible that it could, proceed from any person otherwise of good disposition, or right intention; but for him it was proper, of him it could not be improbable; who by his former violences (such as on the complaints of this people did soon after, as Josephus telleth, remove him from his charge) had so incensed the Jews, that he would not stick to gratify them in a matter wherein they so earnestly concerned themselves; and which in semblance (setting aside considerations of justice and honesty, so little material in such a person's regard) so little touched his own interest; in yielding up so poor, so as to outward show inconsiderable a person, as a boon or sacrifice to their importunate rage; 'Pilate,' saith St. Mark, 'willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.'

Such an one he was; and yet it is observable that in comparison to the furious Jews he behaved himself with some moderation and ingenuity: he was so fair in examination of the case, as, notwithstanding their eager and clamorous prosecution, to discern the right, and to declare our Saviour guiltless: he was so far constant and true to his conscience, as to expostulate with the Jews, and once, twice, a third time, to challenge them, 'Why, what evil hath he done?' As often did he discover his inclination and readiness (yea, his will and intention, his earnest desire—) to free the innocent person: yet had he not the heart or the honesty throughly to resist their importunities; they were more obstinate in their wicked designs, than he resolute in his good purposes: so partly out of fear to offend them, partly out of favor to oblige them, (those two usual corrupters of right judgment,) he yielded to them, unworthily suffering himself to be overborne by their wicked solicitations, so sacrificing acknowleged innocence to his own private interest and their implacable malice. Thus did the heathen judge behave himself, serving divine Providence, not only in the public and formal condemnation of our Saviour to

the punishment due unto us, but in the solemn and serious absolution of him from all blame deserved by himself: in show he condemned our Saviour; in truth he condemned himself, the corrupt judge; and the Jews, the malicious accusers: though he took away his life, yet he cleared his reputation; affording a testimony most valid and convincing of his innocence; such as was requisite to convince all Jewish slanders and aspersions; and sufficient to confirm our faith.

3. Furthermore, the name of Pontius Pilate intimateth the place of our Saviour's passion; he being well known to have been governor of Judea, and to have his tribunal of justice at the mother-city thereof, Jerusalem: at Jerusalem, 'that bloody city,' as the prophet calls it, whose character it was to be the 'killer of the prophets, and the stoner of them who were sent unto her;' out of which it was (in a sort) impossible that a prophet should perish; yet the place of all the world most favored, and graced by God by special blessings and privileges; at Jerusalem, his own peculiar seat; the city of God, the city of the great King, it is styled; the which he 'out of all the tribes of Israel, out of all the people of the earth, had chosen to put his name (to place his especial presence) there;' the holy and and beloved city; there at his own doors, as it were, before his own sacred palace, where most especial respect and veneration were due to him, was the King of heaven adjudged and executed; by procurement of his own servants, peculiarly related to him, the chief priests and elders of his chosen people, persons wholly devoted to his service, and highly dignified by him; whose office and especial duty it was to maintain truth and encourage righteousness, to procure, by their instruction and practice, honor to God and obedience to his commandments; which circumstance considered, as it highly advances the goodness of him who willingly suffered there, and by such persons, so it much aggravateth man's ingratitude and iniquity.

I shall now proceed to handle the rest of the particulars which I proposed in the beginning of the last discourse.

II. We may consider that his suffering was most bitter and painful. We may easily imagine what acerbity of pain must be endured by our Lord, in his tender limbs being stretched forth, racked, and tentered, and continuing a good time in such

a posture; by the piercing his hands and his feet, parts exquisitely sensible with sharp nails, (so that, as it is said of Joseph, 'the iron entered into his soul,') by abiding exposed to the injuries of sun scorching, wind beating on, weather searching his grievous wounds and sores: such a pain it was, and that no stupifying, no transient pain, but a pain very acute, and withal lingering: for we see that he, and those who suffered with him, had both presence of mind and time to discourse; even six long hours did he continue under such torture, sustaining in each minute of them beyond the pangs of an ordinary death. But as the case was so hard and sad, so the reason thereof was great, and the fruit answerably excellent; our Saviour did embrace such a passion, that in being thus ready to endure the most grievous smarts for us, he might demonstrate the vehemence of his love; that he might signify the heinousness of our sins, which deserved that from such a Person so heavy punishment should be exacted; that he might appear to yield a valuable compensation for those everlasting tortures which we should have endured; that he might thoroughly exemplify the hardest duties of obedience and patience. Farther,

III. We may consider this sort of punishment, as most sharp and afflictive, so most vile and shameful; being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy, as Lactantius saith,* of a freeman, however nocent or guilty. It was *servile supplicium*, a punishment never by the Romans, under whose law our Lord suffered, legally inflicted on freemen, but only on slaves, that is, on people scarce regarded as men, having in a sort forfeited or lost themselves; and among the Jews likewise, that execution which most approached thereto, and in part agreed with it, (for they had no so inhuman punishment appointed by their law,) hanging up the dead bodies of some who had been executed, was deemed most infamous and execrable; for 'cursed,' said the law, 'is every one that hangeth on a tree;' cursed, that is, devoted to reproach and malediction; 'accursed of God,' it is in the Hebrew; that is, seeming to be deserted by God, or to be exposed to affliction by his special order.

* Lact. iv. (p. 436.)

Indeed, according to course of things, to be raised on high, and for continuance of time to be objected to the view of all that pass by, in that calamitous posture, doth breed ill suspicion, doth provoke censure, doth invite contempt, scorn, and obloquy; doth naturally draw forth language of derision, despite, and detestation, especially from the inconsiderate, rude, and heart-hearted vulgar; which commonly doth think, speak, deal with men according to event and appearance, (—*sequitur fortunam semper et odit damnatos*,) whence θεατρίζεσθαι,* 'to be made a gazing-stock,' or object of reproach to the multitude, is accounted by the Apostle as an aggravation of the hardships endured by the primitive Christians: and thus in the highest degree did it happen to our Lord; for we read that the people did in that condition mock, jeer, and revile him; ἐξεμυκτήριζον, ἐνέπαιζον, ἐβλασφήμουν, they drew up their noses, they shot out their lips, they shaked their heads at him; they let out their wicked and wanton tongues against him; verifying that prediction in the psalm, 'I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people; all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him:' in this case the same persons who formerly had admired his glorious works, who had been ravished with his excellent discourses, who had followed and favored him so earnestly, who had blessed and magnified him, (for 'he,' saith St. Luke, did 'teach in their synagogues, δοξαζόμενος ὑπὸ πάντων, being glorified by all,') even those very men did then behold him with pitiless scorn and despite; εἱστήκει ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν, 'the people,' saith St. Luke, 'stood gazing on him,' in correspondence to that in the prophet, 'They look and stare on me;' they looked in a scornful manner, venting contemptuous and spiteful reproaches, as we see reported in the evangelical histories.

Thus did our Saviour 'endure the cross, despising the shame;' despising the shame, that is, not simply disregarding or disesteeming it, as no evil, with a Stoical haughtiness, or Cynical immodesty; but not eschewing it, or not valuing it as

* Heb. x. 33.

so great an evil, that for declining it he would neglect the prosecution of his great and glorious designs. There is in man's nature an aversation and abhorrency from disgraceful abuse, no less strong than are the like antipathies to pain; whence cruel mockings and scourgings we find coupled together, as ingredients of the sore persecutions sustained by God's faithful martyrs; and generally men will more readily embrace and more contentedly support the latter than the former; pain not so grievously affecting the lower sense, as being insolently despised doth grate on the fancy and wound the mind; for the wounds of infamy do, as the wise man telleth us, 'go down into the innermost parts of the belly,' piercing the very hearts of men, and touching the soul to the quick. We need not therefore doubt but that our Saviour (as a man endued with human passions and infirmities) was sensible of this natural evil; and that such indignity did add somewhat of bitterness and loathsomeness to his cup of affliction; especially considering that his great charity disposed him to grieve, observing men to act so very indecently, so unworthily, and so unjustly toward him; yet in consideration of the glory that would thence accrue to God, of the benefit that would redound to us, of 'the joy that was set before him,' when he 'should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied,' he did most willingly undertake and gladly undergo it: 'He became,' as the Apostle saith, 'a curse for us,' or was exposed to malediction and reviling; he endured the contradiction (or obloquy) of sinful men, he was 'despised, rejected, and disesteemed of men;' he in the common apprehensions of men did seem deserted by God, according to that of the prophet, 'We did esteem him stricken; smitten of God, and afflicted;' he did himself in a manner seem to concur in that opinion, as by that woful outcry, *Lama sabacthani?* doth appear; so did he become a curse for us, that, as the Apostle subjoineth, 'we might be redeemed from the curse of the Law,' that is, that we might be saved from that exemplary punishment due to our transgressions of the law; with the displeasure of God appearing therein, and the disgrace before men attending it: he chose thus to 'make himself of no reputation,' as the Apostle speaketh, being contented to be dealt with as a wretched slave and wicked miscreant,

that we might be exempted not only from the torment, but also from the ignominy we had deserved; that we, together with our life, and safety, and liberty, might recover even that honor which we had forfeited.

But lest any one should be tempted not sufficiently to value these sufferings of our Lord, as things not so rare, but that other men have tasted the like; or should be ready to compare them with the sufferings of other virtuous men, as Celsus did with those of Anaxarchus and Epictetus; I shall by the bye interpose somewhat observable concerning them. We may then consider that not only the infinite excellency of his person, and the perfect innocency of his life, did enhance the price of his sufferings, but some endowments peculiar to him, and some circumstances, did increase their force: he was not only, according to the frame and temper of human nature, sensibly affected with the pain and shame, and all the rest of evils apparently waiting on his passion; as God (when he did insert sense and passion in our nature, ordering objects to affect them) did intend that we should be, and as other men in like outward circumstances would have been, but in many respects beyond that ordinary rate; no man, we may suppose, could have felt such grief from them as he did; no man did ever feel any thing comparable to what he did endure; it might be truly applied to him, 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger,' as that extraordinary sweating great lumps of blood may argue; as the terms expressing his affliction do intimate; for, in regard to present evils, his soul is said to have been exceedingly sorrowful unto death; he is said, ἀδημονεῖν, to be in great anguish and anxiety; and to be in an agony, or pang; in respect to mischiefs which he foresaw coming on, he is said, ταράττεσθαι τῷ πνεύματι, to be disordered, or disturbed in spirit, and ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, to be amazed, or dismayed at them; to such excessive height of passion did the sense of incumbent evils and the prospect of impendent disasters, the apprehension of his own case and reflexion on our state, raise him: and no wonder that such a burden, the weight of all the sins (the numberless heinous sins and abominations) which he did appropriate to himself,

that ever have been, or shall be committed by mankind, lying on his shoulders, he should feel it heavy, he should seem to crouch and groan under it; 'Innumerable evils,' said he in the mystical Psalm, 'have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth me.' God's indignation so dreadfully flaming out against sin might well astonish and terrify him; to stand before the mouth of hell belching out fire and brimstone on him, to lie down in the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, to undertake with his heart-blood to quench all the wrath of heaven and all the flames of hell, (as he did in regard to those who will not rekindle them to themselves,) might well in the heart of a man beget unconceivable and unexpressible pressures of anguish; when such a Father (so infinitely good and kind to him, and whom he so dearly loved) did hide his face from him, did angrily frown on him, how could he otherwise than be sorely troubled? It is not strange that so hearty a love, so tender a pity contemplating our sinfulness, and sustaining our wretchedness, should be deeply affected thereby; any one of those persons, who fondly do pretend to, or vainly glory in, a stupid apathy, or in a stubborn contempt of the evils incident to our nature and state, would in such a case have been utterly dejected; the most resolved philosopher would have been dashed into confusion at the sight, would have been crushed to despair under the sense of those calamities which assaulted our Lord. With the greatness of the causes, the goodness of his constitution might also conspire to augment his suffering; for surely as his complexion was most pure and delicate, his spirit most vivid and apprehensive, his affections most pliant and tractable; so accordingly should the impressions on him be most sensible; and consequently the pains which he felt both in soul and body most sharp and afflictive. That we in like cases are not alike affected, that we do not tremble at the apprehensions of God's displeasure, that we are not affrighted with the sense of our sins, that we do not with sad horror resent our own danger or our misery, doth arise from that we have very glimmering and faint conceptions of those things, or that they do not in so clear and lively a manner strike our mind and fancy; (not appear-

ing in their true nature and proper shape, so heinous and so hideous, as they really in themselves and in their consequences are,) or because that we have but weak persuasions about them; or because we do but slightly consider them; or from that our hearts are hard and callous, our affections cold and dull, so that nothing of this nature (nothing beside gross material affairs) can easily move or melt them; or for that we have in us small love to God, and little regard to our own true welfare; for that briefly in respect to spiritual matters, we are neither so wise, so serious, so sober, nor so good and ingenuous in any reasonable measure, as we ought to be: but our Saviour in all these respects was otherwise disposed; he most evidently discerned the wrath of God, the grievousness of sin, the wretchedness of man most truly, most fully, most strongly represented to his imagination and spirit; he most firmly believed, yea most certainly knew all that God's law had declared about them; he thoroughly did consider and weigh them; his heart was most soft and sensible; his affections were most quick, and easily excited by their due objects; he was full of dutiful love to God his Father, and most ardently desirous of our good, bearing a more than fraternal good-will toward us; whence it is not marvellous that as a man, as a transcendently good man, he was so vehemently affected by those occurrences; that his imagination was so troubled, and his affections so mightily stirred by them; so that he thence truly did suffer in a manner and to a degree unconceivable; according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies, *Διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστέ·* 'By thy unknown sufferings, O Christ, have mercy on us.' But farther,

IV. We may consider that this way of suffering had in it some particular advantages conducing to the accomplishment of our Lord's principal design.

Its being very notorious, and lasting a competent time, were good advantages; for if he had been privately made away, or suddenly dispatched, no such great notice would have been taken of it, nor would the matter of fact itself have been so fully proved to the confirmation of our faith, and conviction of infidelity; nor had that his excellent deportment under such bitter affliction, (his most divine patience, meekness, and

charity,) so illustriously shone forth: wherefore (to prevent all exceptions, and excuses of unbelief, and for other collateral good purposes) divine Providence did so manage the business, that as the course of his life, so also the manner of his death should be most conspicuous and remarkable; 'These things,' as St. Paul told king Agrippa, 'were not done in a corner;' and 'I,' said our Lord himself, 'spake freely to the world, and in secret have I done nothing;' so were the proceedings of his life, not close or clancular, but frank and open; not presently hushed up, but carried on leisurely in the face of the world; that men might have the advantage to observe and examine them. And as he lived, so he died most publicly and visibly, the world being witness of his death, and so prepared to believe his resurrection, and thence ready to embrace his doctrine; according to what he did himself foretel, 'I being lifted up from the earth shall draw all men unto me;' he drew all men by so remarkable a death to take notice of it, he drew some from the wondrous consequences of it to believe on him: and, 'As,' saith he again, 'Moses did exalt the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be exalted:' the elevation of that mysterious serpent on a pole did render it visible, and attracted the eyes of people toward it; whereby God's power invisibly accompanying that sacramental performance, they were cured of those mortiferous stings which they had received; so our Lord being mounted on the cross, allured the eyes of men to behold, and their hearts to close with him; whereby the heavenly virtue of God's Spirit co-operating, they become saved from those destructive sins, which by the Devil's serpentine instigations they had incurred.

Another advantage of this kind of suffering was, that by it the nature of that kingdom which he intended to erect, was evidently signified; that it was not such as the carnal people did expect, an external, earthly, temporal kingdom, consisting in domination over the bodies and estates of men, dignified by outward wealth and splendor, managed by worldly power and policy, promoted by force and terror of arms, affording to men the advantages of outward safety, peace, and prosperity; but a kingdom purely spiritual, heavenly, eternal; consisting in the government of men's hearts and spirits; adorned with endow-

ments of piety and virtue, administered by the grace and guidance of God's Holy Spirit, maintained and propagated by meek instruction, by virtuous example, by hearty devotion and humble patience; rewarding its loyal subjects with spiritual joys and consolations here, with endless rest and bliss hereafter; no other kingdom could he be presumed to design, who submitted to this dolorous and disgraceful way of suffering; no other exploits could he pretend to achieve by expiring on a cross, no other way could he govern who gave himself up to be managed by the will of his enemies; no other benefits would that forlorn case allow him to dispense; so that well might he then assert, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' when he was going in this signal manner to demonstrate that great truth. It was a touchstone to prove men's disposition, and to discriminate the ingenuous, well-disposed, humble, and sober persons, who would entertain our Lord's heavenly doctrine with acceptance, notwithstanding these disadvantages, 'not being offended in him,' from those perverse, vain, proud, profane people, who being scandalised at his adversity would reject him.

Another advantage was this, that by it God's special providence was discovered, and his glory illustrated in the propagation of the gospel; for how could it be that a person of so low parentage, of so mean garb, of so poor condition, who underwent so woful and despicable a kind of death, falling under the pride and spite of his adversaries, should so easily gain so general an opinion in the world, (among the best, the wisest, the greatest persons,) of being 'the Lord of life and glory;' how, I say, could it be that such a miracle should be effected without God's aid and special concurrence? that Herod, who from a long reign in a flourishing state, with prosperous success in his undertakings, got the name of Great; or that Vespasian, who triumphantly did ascend the imperial throne, should either of them by a few admirers of worldly vanity, seriously or in flattery, be deemed the Messias, is not so very strange: but that one who so miserably was trampled on, and treated as a wretched caitiff, should instantly conquer innumerable hearts, and from such a depth of extreme adversity should attain the sublimest pitch of glory; that 'the stone which the builders' with so much scorn 'did refuse, should become the head-stone

of the corner,' this (with good assurance we may say) 'is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' It may well be so, and thereby the excellency of divine power and wisdom was much glorified; by so impotent, so implausible and improbable means, accomplishing so great effects; subduing the world to his obedience, not by the active valor of an illustrious hero, but through the patient submission of a poor, abused, and oppressed person; restoring mankind to life by the death of a crucified Saviour.

Again, this kind of suffering to the devout fathers did seem many ways significant, or full of instructive and admonitive emblems; being a rich and large field for a devout fancy to range with affectionate meditation.

His posture on the cross might represent unto us that large and comprehensive charity which he bare in his heart toward us, stretching forth his arms of kindness, pity, and mercy, with them, as it were, to embrace the world, receiving all mankind under the wings of his gracious protection.

It might exhibit him as earnestly wooing and intreating us to return unto God, accepting the reconciliation which he then was purchasing, and did then offer to us; 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people,' said God of old, doing it then mediately and figurately by his prophets, but he did so now immediately and properly by himself; the cross being as a pulpit, from which our Lord God blessed for ever did himself in person earnestly preach the overtures of grace, did exhort to repentance, did tender the remission of sin, with action most pathetical and affecting.

His ascent to the cross might set forth his discharging that high office of universal High Priest for all ages and all people; the cross being an altar whereon he did offer up his own flesh, and pour forth his blood, as a pure and perfect sacrifice, propitiating God and expiating the sins of mankind.

His elevation thither may suggest to our thoughts that submission to God's will, suffering for truth and righteousness, the exercises of humility and patience, are conjoined with exaltation, do qualify for, and in effect procure true preferment; so that the lower we stoop in humility, the higher we shall rise in favor with God, the nearer we shall approach to heaven; the

surer we shall be of God's blessing, according to that aphorism of our Lord, 'Whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted.' The cross was a throne, whereon humility and patience did sit in high state and glorious majesty, advanced above all worldly pride and insolence; it was a great step, a sure ascent unto the celestial throne of dignity superlative; for because our Lord 'was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore did God far exalt him above all dignity and power in heaven and earth,' as St. Paul doth teach us.

O the fallacy of human sense! O the vanity of carnal judgment! nothing ever was more auspicious or more happy than this event, which had so dismal an aspect, and provoked so contemptuous scorn in some, so grievous pity in others: the devil thought he had done bravely, when he had by his suggestions brought the Son of God into this case; the world supposed itself highly prosperous in its attempts against him; but O how blind and foolish is malice, which then doth most hurt itself, when it triumpheth in the mischief which it doeth to others! How impotent is wickedness, which is never more thoroughly ruined than by its own greatest success! for by thus striving to debase our Lord, they most highly did advance him; by thus crossing our salvation, they most effectually did promote it.

Farther, looking up to the cross may admonish us how our salvation is acquired, and whence it doth proceed; not by casting our eyes downward, not from any thing that lieth on earth; but 'our help cometh from above,' our salvation is attained by looking upwards; we must lift up our eyes to behold our Saviour procuring it, we must raise up our hearts to derive it from him.

Our Lord's crucifixion may also intimate to us how our flesh must be dealt with, and to what usage we must submit it; for we must not only imitate our Saviour in his holy life, but in some manner should resemble him in his ghastly death; being, as St. Paul speaketh, 'conformable to his death,' and 'planted together with him in the likeness of it;' 'mortifying our earthly members, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts;' having our 'old man crucified together with Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed.' His death may fitly shadow

our death to sin, his grievous pain the bitterness of our repentance, wherein our souls should be pierced with sharp compunction, as his sacred flesh was torn with nails; his shame that confusion of mind, which regard to our offences should produce within us.

Reflecting on him we may also discern our state here; wherein, if we will be truly and thoroughly virtuous, we must be exposed to envy and hatred, to censure and obloquy, to contempt and scorn, to affliction and hardship; every good man must hang on some cross; *εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα*, 'We are,' saith St. Paul, 'appointed to this;' it is our lot and portion assigned to us by divine immutable decree; being 'predestinated to a conformity with this image of God's Son:' 'We must,' as he did, 'by many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God:' 'All that will live godlily in Christ Jesus shall certainly suffer persecution,' one way or other partaking of his cross.

Divers such analogies and resemblances devout meditation might extract from this matter, suggesting practical truths, and exciting good affections in us.

V. We may (for the confirmation of our faith, and begetting in us a due adoration of the divine wisdom and providence) observe the correspondency of this our Saviour's manner of suffering to the ancient prophecies foretelling, and the typical representations foreshowing it.

That most famous, clear, and complete prophecy concerning the passion, doth express him suffering as a malefactor, ('he was reckoned among the transgressors,') suffering in a manner very painful, (he was 'wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,') suffering in a most ignominious way, (he was 'despised, and rejected of men, as a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief,') which circumstances could scarce so punctually agree to any other kind of suffering, or punishment then used, as to this.

In the 22nd Psalm, the royal prophet describeth an afflicted and forlorn condition, such as by no passages in the story concerning him doth in the full extent, and according to the literal signification of his words, appear suitable to his person, which therefore is more properly to be accommodated unto the Messias, whom he did represent; and in that description, among

other passages agreeing to our Lord, these words do occur? 'Thou hast brought me into the dust of death; for dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet;' which words how patly and livelily do they set out our Saviour's being nailed to the cross, and treated in that cruel and in that shameful way by his malicious adversaries?

In the prophet Zechariah, God speaking in his own name, 'They,' (namely some of the Jews, being sensible of what they had acted, and penitently affected for it, they) 'shall look on me, whom they have pierced;' which words need no violence to wring from them the right meaning, no comment to explain them, in accommodation to that matter to which the Evangelists do apply them, and to which they are so literally congruous.

The same was also fitly prefigured by apposite types. Isaac, the immediate heir of the promise, in whom the faithful seed was called and conveyed down, and so a most apt type of our Saviour, being devoted and offered up to God, did himself bear the wood by which he was to be offered: so did our Saviour, the promised seed, in whom all nations should be blessed, himself bear the cross by which he was to suffer and to be offered up a sacrifice to God.

Those who were dangerously bitten by fiery serpents, were, by looking on a brazen serpent set on a pole, preserved in life, which (according to most authentic exposition) did represent the salvation which should proceed from our beholding and believing on him lifted up on the cross to us, who had been mortally struck and stung by that old serpent's poisonous insinuations.

The paschal lamb was a most congruous emblem of Christ our passover, (that most innocent and meek, most unblemished and spotless Lamb, slain for the sins of the world.) It was to be killed by the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel, its blood was to be dashed on the side-posts and cross-beams of every door; its body was not to be eaten raw, nor sodden with water, but roasted whole, and dressed on a spit; nor were any of its bones to be broken: which circumstances, with so exact caution and care prescribed, how they justly suit and fitly adum-

brate this manner of our Saviour's passion, I need not otherwise than by the bare mention of them declare; every one easily being able to compare and adapt them.

VI. Lastly, the consideration of our Lord's thus suffering is applicable to our practice; being most apt to instruct and affect us; admonishing us of our duty, and exciting us to a conscionable performance thereof: no contemplation indeed is more fruitful, or more efficacious toward the sanctification of our hearts and lives, than this of the cross; for what good affection may not the meditation on it kindle? what virtue may it not breed and cherish in us?

1. How can it otherwise than inflame our heart with love toward our Lord, to think what acerbity of pain, what indignity of shame he did willingly undertake, and gladly endure for us? No imagination can devise a greater expression of charity and friendship; and if love naturally is productive of love, if friendship meriteth a correspondence in kindness, what effect should the consideration of such ineffable love, of so incomparable friendship, have on us?

2. How can a reflexion on this case otherwise than work hearty gratitude in us? Suppose any person for our sake (that he might rescue us from the greatest mischiefs, and purchase for us the highest benefits) willingly should deprive himself of all his estate, his honor, his ease and pleasure, should expose himself to extremest hazards, should endure the sorest pains and most disgraceful ignominies, should prostitute his life, and lose it in the most hideous manner: should we not then be monstrously ingrateful, if we did not most deeply resent such kindness; if on all occasions we did not express our thankfulness for it; if we did not ever readily yield all the acknowlegement and all the requital we were able? The case in regard to our Lord is the same in kind, but in degree, whatever we can suppose, doth infinitely fall below the performances for us of him who stooped from the top of heaven, who laid aside the felicity and majesty of God for the sorrows and infamies of the cross, that he might redeem us from the torments of hell, and procure to us the joys of heaven; so that our obligation to gratitude is unexpressibly great, and we are extremely unworthy if the effects in our heart and life be not answerable.

3. What surer ground of faith in God, or stronger encouragement of hope can there be, than is hence afforded to us? for if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for our sake to the suffering of these bitter pains and contumelies; how can we in any case distrust his bounty, or despair of his mercy? 'How,' as St. Paul argueth, 'shall he not also with him freely give us all things?' What higher favor could God express, what lower condescension could he show; how more plainly or surely could he testify his willingness and his delight to do us good, than by ordering the Son of his love to undergo these most grievous things for us? How consequently could there be laid a stronger foundation of our hope and intire confidence in God?

4. What greater engagement (in general) can there be to obedience, than to consider how readily and cheerfully our Lord did submit to the will of God, in bearing the most heavy yoke that could be imposed on him, in drinking the most bitter cup that could be tempered for him: how that he 'did humble himself, being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?' how dearly he did purchase his property in us, and dominion over us?

What detestation of our sins must the serious consideration of this event produce in us? of our sins, that brought such tortures and such reproaches on our blessed Redeemer. Judas the wretch who betrayed him, the Jewish priests who did accuse and prosecute him, the wicked rout which abused and insulted over him, those cruel hands that smote him, those pitiless hearts that scorned him, those poisonous tongues that mocked and reviled him, all those, who anywise were instruments or abettors of his affliction, how do we loathe them! how do we detest and curse their memories! But how much greater reason have we to abominate our sins, which were the principal causes of all that woful tragedy! 'He was delivered for our offences;' they were indeed the traitors, which by the hands of Judas delivered him up; 'He that knew no sin was made sin for us;' that is, was accused, was condemned, was executed as a sinner for us: it was therefore we who by our sins did impeach him; the spiteful priests were but our advocates; we by them did adjudge and sentence him, Pilate (against his will and con-

science) was but our spokesman; we by them did inflict that horrid punishment on him, the Roman executioners were but our agents therein: 'He became a curse for us;' that is, all the mockery, derision, and contumely he endured did proceed from us; the silly people were but properties, acting our parts; our sins were they that cried out *Crucifige*, (Crucify him, Crucify him,) with clamors more loud and more effectual than did all the Jewish rabble; it was they which by the borrowed throats of that base people did so outrageously persecute him; 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;' it was they which by the hands of the fierce soldiers and of the rude populacy, as by senseless engines, did buffet and scourge him; they by the nails and thorns did pierce his flesh and rend his sacred body: on them therefore it is most just and fit that we should turn our hatred, that we should discharge our indignation.

5. And what in reason can be more powerful to the breeding in us remorse and penitent sorrow, than reflexion on such horrible effects proceeding from our sins? how can we but earnestly grieve, when we consider ourselves by them to have been the betrayers, the slanderers, the murderers of a person so innocent and lovely, of one so great and glorious, of God's dear Son, and the Lord of all things, of our own best friend, and most kind Saviour!

6. If ingenuity will not operate so far, and hereby melt us into contrition, yet surely this consideration must needs produce some fear within us; for can we at least otherwise than tremble to think on the heinous guilt of our sins, on the fierceness of God's wrath against them, on the severity of divine judgment for them, all so manifestly discovered, all so livelily set forth in this dismal spectacle? If the view of an ordinary execution is apt to beget in us some terror, some dread of the law, some reverence toward authority, what awful impressions should this singular example of divine justice work on us! How greatly we should be moved thereby, we may learn from the deportment of the most inanimate creatures; the whole world did seem affected thereat with horror; the frame of things was disturbed, all nature did feel a kind of compassion and compunction for it; the sun (as out of aversion or shame) did hide

his face, leaving the earth covered for three hours with mournful blackness; the bowels of the earth did yearn and quake; the rocks were rent; the vail of the temple was torn quite through; graves did open, and the bodies did wake; and can we (who are most concerned) be more stupid than the earth, more obdurate than rocks, more drowsy than buried carcases, the most insensible and immovable things in nature?

7. How also can it but hugely deter us from wilful commission of sin, to consider that by it we do, as the Apostle teacheth, 'recrucify the Son of God, and again expose him to open shame;' bringing on the stage, and acting over all that direful tragedy; renewing (as to our guilt) all that pain and that disgrace to him; that we thereby, as he telleth us, do 'trample on the Son of God, and prize the blood of the covenant' (that most sacred and precious blood, so freely shed for the demonstration of God's mercy, and the ratification of his gracious intentions toward us) 'as a common thing,' of no special worth or consideration with us; despising all his so kind and painful endeavors for our salvation; defeating his most gracious purposes and earnest desires for our welfare; rendering all his so bitter and loathsome sufferings, in regard to us, altogether vain and fruitless, yea indeed hurtful and pernicious; for if the cross do not save us from our sins, it will sorely aggravate their guilt, and augment their punishment, bringing a severer condemnation and a sadder ruin on us.

8. It may also yield great consolation and joy to us, to contemplate our Lord on the cross, expressing his immense goodness and charity toward us; transacting our redemption; expiating our sins, and sustaining our miseries; combating and defeating all the adversaries of our salvation.

Is it not comfortable and pleasant to behold him there standing erect, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a glorious conqueror; where 'having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a solemn show, triumphing over them?' No conqueror loftily seated in his triumphal chariot did ever yield a spectacle so gallant or magnificent; no tree was ever adorned with trophies so pompous or precious. To the external view and carnal sense of men, our Lord was then exposed to scorn and shame; but to spiritual and true discerning, all his and our

enemies did there hang up, as objects of contempt, quite overthrown and undone: there the devil, ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, that strong and sturdy one, did hang, bound and fettered, disarmed and spoiled, utterly baffled and confounded. There death itself hung gasping, with its sting plucked out, and all its terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and purchased immortality for us. There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its fondly admired excellencies, its bewitching pleasures, did hang up, all disparaged and defaced, as it appeared to St. Paul; 'God forbid,' said he, 'that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' There our sins, those sins which, as St. Peter saith, our Saviour 'did carry up unto the gibbet,' did hang, as marks of his victorious prowess, as objects of our horror and hatred, as malefactors by him 'condemned in the flesh.' There that manifold enmity (enmity between God and man, between one man and another, between man and his own self, or conscience) did hang, 'abolished in his flesh,' and 'slain on the cross; by the blood whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth.' The blood of the cross was the cement, joining the parts of the world. There, together with all our enemies, did hang all those causes of woe and misery to us, those yokes of bondage, those instruments of vexation, those hard laws, which did so much burden and incumber men, did set them at such distance and variance, did so far subject them to guilt and condemnation; all 'that bond of ordinances,' inducing our obligation to so grievous forfeitures and penalties, was 'nailed to the cross,' being cancelled and expunged by our Saviour's performances there.

9. This consideration is a strong inducement to the practice of charity toward our neighbor: for can we forbear to love those, toward whom our Lord bore such tender affection, for whom he did sustain so woful tortures and indignities? Shall we not in obedience to his most urgent commands, in conformity to his most notable example, in grateful return to him for his benefits, who thus did suffer for us, discharge this most sweet and easy duty toward his beloved friends? Shall we not comport with an infirmity, or bear a petty neglect, or forgive a small injury to our brother, whenas our Lord did bear a cross

for us, and from us, obtaining pardon for our numberless most heinous affronts and offences against God? It is St. Paul's reasoning; 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak—for even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.' Can we hear our Lord say, 'This is my command, That ye love one another, as I have loved you;' and, 'Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another:' can we hear St. Paul exhorting, 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor:' can we consider St. John's arguing, 'Beloved, if God so loved us, then ought we also to love one another:' 'Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: wherefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?' can, I say, we consider such discourses, without being disposed to comply with them for the sake of our crucified Saviour; all whose life and death were nothing else but one continual recommendation and enforcement of this duty?

10. Farthermore, what can be more operative than this consideration toward breeding a disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous delights; toward reconciling our minds to the worst condition it can bring us into; toward supporting our hearts under the heaviest pressures of affliction it can lay on us? How can we refuse, in submission to God's pleasure, to bear contentedly a slight grievance, when he, as he gladly did, bore a cross, infinitely more grievous to carnal will and sense than any that can befall us? Can we expect, can we affect, can we desire great prosperity, whenas the Son of God, our Lord and Master, did only taste such adversity? Who can admire those splendid trifles which our Lord did never regard in his life, which at his death did only serve to mock and abuse him? Who can relish those sordid pleasures, of which he living did not vouchsafe to taste, and the contraries whereof he dying chose to feel in all extremity? Who will dare to vilify, to disdain, to reject a state of sorrow or disgrace, which he by a voluntary susception of it hath so dignified and graced; by which we resemble and become conformable to him; by which we concur and partake with him;

yea, by which we may promote, and in a sort complete, his designs; 'filling up,' as St. Paul speaketh, 'that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh?' Who now can much prefer being esteemed, applauded, approved or favored by men, before infamy, reproach, derision, or persecution from them, especially when these do follow conscientious adherence to righteousness? Who can be very ambitious of worldly honor or repute, covetous of wealth, or greedy of pleasure, who observeth the only Son of God choosing rather to hang on a cross than to sit on a throne; inviting the clamors of spite and scorn, rather than acclamations of blessing and praise; divesting himself of all secular pomp, plenty, conveniences and solaces; embracing the garb of a slave and the repute of a malefactor, before the dignity and respect of a prince, which were his due, and which he easily could have obtained? Can we imagine it a very happy thing to be high and prosperous in this world, to swim here in affluence and pleasure; can we take it for a misery to be mean and low, to conflict with any wants or straits here, seeing the fountain of all happiness did himfelf condescend to so forlorn a state, and was pleased to become so deep a sufferer? If with the eyes of our mind we do behold our Lord hanging naked on a gibbet, besmeared with his own blood, groaning under extreme anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of disgraceful abuses, 'yielding,' as the prophet foretold of him, 'his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, hiding not his face from shame and spitting;' will not the imagination of such a sight dim the lustre of all earthly grandeurs and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions, quash all the glee which we can find in any wild frolics or riotous merriments?

11. It is surely a great commendation of afflictions, and a strong consolation under them, to ponder well this point; for if hardship was to our Lord a school of duty, 'he,' as the Apostle saith, 'learning obedience from what he suffered;' if it was to him an instrument of perfection, as the same Apostle implieth, when he saith, that 'it became God to perfect the Captain of our salvation by suffering;' if it was a means of procuring the divine favor even to him, as those words import, 'Therefore

the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life;' if it was to him a step unto glory, according to that saying, 'Was not Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?' yea, if it was a ground of conferring on him that sublimest pitch of dignity above all creatures, as we are taught; for 'because,' saith St. Paul, 'he was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, therefore did God exalt him, and gave him a name above every name;' and, 'We see Jesus,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor;' and, 'Worthy,' crieth out the heavenly society in the Revelations, 'is the Lamb that was slain,' and 'who redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;' if affliction did minister such advantages to him; and if by our conformity to him in undergoing it with like submission, humility, and patience, it may afford the like to us, what reason can there be, that we should anywise be discomposed, discouraged, or disconsolate under it? Much more reason surely there is, that with St. Paul and all the holy Apostles we should boast, rejoice, and exult in our tribulations; far more cause we have with them to esteem it a favor, a privilege, and an ornament to us, than to be discontented or displeased therewith. To do thus is a duty incumbent on us as Christians; for 'he,' saith our Master, 'that doth not take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me:' 'He that doth not carry his cross, and go after me, cannot be my disciple:' he that doth not willingly take the cross, when it is presented to him by God's hand; he that doth not contentedly bear it, when it is by providence imposed on him, is nowise worthy of the honor to wait on Christ; he is not capable to be reckoned among the disciples of our heavenly Master; he is not worthy of Christ, as not having the courage, the constancy, the sincerity required of a Christian; of one pretending to such great benefits, such high privileges, such excellent rewards, as Christ our Lord and Saviour doth propose; he cannot be Christ's disciple, showing such incapacity to learn those needful lessons of humility and patience dictated by him; declaring such an indisposition to transcribe those copies of submission to divine will, self-denial and self-resignation, so fairly set him by the instruction and

example of Christ: 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind;' and, 'Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps,' saith St. Peter.

12. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross is indeed the express condition, and the proper character of our Christianity;* in signification whereof it hath been from immemorial time a constant usage to mark those who enter into it with the figure of the cross. The cross, as the instrument by which our peace with God was wrought, as the stage whereon our Lord did act the last part of his miraculous obedience, consummating our redemption; as the field wherein the Captain of our salvation did achieve his noble victory, and erect his glorious trophies over all the enemies thereof, was well assumed to be the badge of our profession, the ensign of our spiritual warfare, the pledge of our constant adherence to our crucified Saviour; in relation to whom our chief hope is grounded, our great joy and sole glory doth consist; for, 'God forbid,' saith St. Paul, 'that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.'

Let it be to the Jews a scandal, or offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity; let it be folly to the Greeks, or seem absurd to men imbued (puffed up, corrupted) with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing men to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy; that God should put his own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness should issue from these fountains of extreme sorrow and shame; that a person in external semblance devoted to so opprobrious and slavish usage should be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world; let this doctrine, I say, be scandalous and distasteful to some persons tainted with prejudice; let it appear strange and incredible to others blinded with self-conceit; let all the proud, all the profane, all the inconsiderate part of mankind

* Naz. Or. 38. ad fin.

slight and reject it; yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; to us it is πιστὸς λόγος, 'a faithful (and credible) proposition, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world thus to save sinners:' to us, who discern by a clearer light, and are endued with a purer sense, kindled by the divine Spirit, from whence, with comfortable satisfaction of mind, we may apprehend and taste that God could not in a higher measure, or a fitter manner, illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice, his infinite grace and mercy toward his poor creatures, his holy displeasure against wickedness, his impartial severity in punishing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating his own honor and authority, than by thus ordering his Son to suffer for us; that also true virtue and goodness could not otherwise be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impressed with greater advantage.

We might allege the suffrages of eminent philosophers, persons esteemed most wise by improvement of natural light, who have declared that perfection of virtue can hardly be produced or expressed otherwise than by undergoing most sharp afflictions and tortures;* and that God therefore, as a wise Father, is wont with them to exercise those whom he best loveth: we might also produce instances of divers persons, even among Pagans,† most famous and honorable in the judgment of all posterity for their singular virtue and wisdom, who were tried in this furnace, and thereby shone most brightly; their suffering, by the iniquity and ingratitude, by the envy and malignity of their times, in their reputation, liberty, and life; their undergoing foul slanders, infamous punishments, and ignominious deaths, more than any other practices of their life, recommending them to the regard and admiration of future ages; although none of them, as our Lord, did suffer of choice, or on design to advance the interests of goodness, but on constraint, and irresistible force put on them; none of them did suffer in a manner so signal, with circumstances so rare, and with events so wonderful; yet suffering as they did was their chief glory; whence it

* Sen. de Prov. iii. Plut. de Stoic. contr. p. 1931.

† Socrates, Phocion, Thraceas, Aristides, &c. Vid. Ælian. Var. xi. 9. 2. 43.

seemeth that even according to the sincerest dictates of common wisdom this dispensation was not so unaccountable; nor ought the Greeks, in consistency with themselves, and in respect to their own admired philosophy, to have deemed our doctrine of the cross foolish or unreasonable.

To conclude; since thereby a charity and humanity so unparalleled, (far transcending theirs who have been celebrated for devoting their lives out of love to their country, or kindness to their friends,) a meekness so incomparable, a resolution so invincible, a patience so heroical, were manifested for the instruction and direction of men; since never were the vices and the vanities of the world (so prejudicial to the welfare of mankind) so remarkably disparaged; since never any suffering could pretend to so worthy and beneficial effects, the expiation of the whole world's sin, and reconciliation of mankind to God, such as no performance beside, nor any other sacrifice did ever aim to procure; since, in fine, no virtue had ever so glorious rewards, as sovereign dignity to him that exercised it, and eternal happiness to those who imitate it; since, I say, there be such excellent uses and fruits of the cross borne by our Blessed Saviour, we can have no reason to be offended at it, or ashamed of it; but with all reason heartily we should approve and humbly adore, as well the deep wisdom of God, as all other his glorious attributes, illustriously displayed therein: to whom therefore, as is most due, let us devoutly render all thanks, all praise, and glory.

And, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.'

'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXVII.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP XV.—VERSE 3.

PRELIMINARY observations. The death of our Lord is the subject of this discourse: various considerations respecting it proposed.

I. As for its nature, we must affirm and believe that it was a true and proper death, in kind not different from that to which all we mortals are by the law of our nature subjected. Such is expressed by all the terms appropriated to it: this fully shown. And by the ordinary signs of death, apparent to sense, the soldiers judged him dead. His transition also, and abiding in this state, are expressed by terms declaring the propriety of his death, and its agreement with our death: this shown. It were also not hard to show how all other phrases and circumlocutions, by which human death is expressed in Scripture, or in common language, or by philosophers, are either expressly applied, or by consequence are plainly applicable to the death of our Saviour: this enlarged on.

II. Those peculiar adjuncts and respects of our Lord's death considered, which commend it to our regard, and amplify its worth. 1. Its being a result of God's eternal counsel and decree, *according to an eternal purpose*, by which our Saviour was *a lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.* 2. Its being a matter of free consent and compact between God and his Son. It was pre-ordained by God; and our Saviour's reply was: *Lo! I come to do thy will, O God.* 3. Its great excellency and efficacy, appearing from manifold types foreshadowed, and in divers prophecies foretold: these fully dilated

on. 4. Its being compassed by God's especial providence directing and disposing it, though not without the active concurrence of men; so that although as a work of divine Providence it was most admirable, yet as an act of human pravity it was the most heinous ever committed. 5. Its great commendation in the quality of our blessed Saviour's person: how valuable must be the death of one so incomparably transcendant in glory!

III. Consideration of the causes and principles whence the death of Christ proceeded; which moved God to determine it, and our Lord to undertake it. The acts of both were most voluntary and free: this shown. Principles disposing them to this goodness dilated on.

There is in Scripture a threefold love of God towards men intimated. 1. A general love to mankind antecedent to the sending of our Lord and his performances, being the ground of God's designing them. 2. A love, consequent on these, and procured by them, &c. 3. A peculiar love of friendship and complacence, which God bears to all who sincerely turn and adhere to him, repenting of their sins, and embracing the gospel, &c. The like principles are said to move our Lord to undergo death for us. To these may be added our sins, as the meritorious causes of our Saviour's death: *he was bruised for our iniquities.* He died for us, not only as men, but as sinful and wretched men: this enlarged on.

IV. The ends which our Lord's death aims at considered.

1. The illustration of God's glory, by displaying his most glorious attributes and perfections, as St. Paul teaches. *Whom God hath set forth a propitiation by faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness.*

2. The dignifying and exaltation of our Lord himself, which is what he himself foresaw and foretold.

3. The salvation of mankind; which he procured by appeasing that wrath which God bears towards iniquity, and recon-

ciling him to men, who by sin were alienated from him: this topic dilated on.

Other subordinate designs and effects of our Lord's death stated; as, the reparation of God's honor; the ratification of the new covenant; the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth; the defeat of death, and of the powers of darkness; the engaging us to the practice of all righteousness and obedience; for attestation to, and confirmation of divine truth.

V. Some of the practical influences which a consideration of this point should have on us. 1. It should beget in us the highest degree of love and gratitude towards God, and our Saviour. 2. It should raise in us great faith and hope in God, excluding all distrust or despair. 3. It should comfort and satisfy us in regard to our sins, supposing that we heartily repent of them. 4. It discovers to us their heinousness, and thereby should move our detestation of them. 5. It should work in us a kindly contrition and remorse for them; 6. and engage us carefully to avoid them, *as crucifying him afresh*. 7. It should engage us to patience and resignation to the will of God. 8. It obliges us to the deepest mortification, in conformity with Christ's death, *being with him crucified* to the lusts of the flesh. 9. It is also a strong engagement to the fullest measure of charity towards our brethren. 10. We are hence obliged to yield ourselves wholly up to the service of our Saviour, to the promoting of his interest and glory; since, as St. Paul observes, *we are not our own; being bought with a price*, &c. Conclusion.

Dead and Buried.

SERMON XXVII.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. XV.—VERSE 3.

For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

ST. PAUL, meaning in this chapter to maintain a very fundamental point of our religion ('the resurrection of the dead') against some infidels or heretics, who among the Corinthians, his scholars in the faith, did oppose it; doth, in order to the proof of his assertion, and refutation of that pernicious error, premise those doctrines, which he having received both from relation of the other Apostles, and by immediate revelation from God himself, had delivered unto them, ἐν πρώτοις, in the first place, or among the prime things; that is, as most eminent and important points of Christian doctrine; the truth whereof consequently (standing on the same foundations with Christianity itself, on Divine revelation and apostolical testimony) could nowise be disputed of, or doubted, by any good Christian. Of which doctrines (the collection of which he styleth the gospel; that gospel, by embracing and retaining which they were, he saith, to be saved) the first is that in our text, concerning the death of our Lord, undergone by him for our salvation: which point, as of all others in our religion it is of peculiar consequence, so it much concerneth us both firmly to believe it and well to understand it; for it is by faith in his blood that we are justified, and by knowing Christ crucified we shall be chiefly edified; the word imparting this knowlege being the power of God to salvation. It therefore I mean now, by God's assistance, to explain and apply; the

which I shall do generally and absolutely; without any particular accommodation of my discourse to the words to this text; yet so as to comprehend all the particulars observable in them. The death of our Lord then is my subject, and about it I shall consider, 1. Its nature, or wherein it did consist. 2. Some peculiar adjuncts and respects thereof, which commend it to our regard, and render it considerable to us. 3. The principles and (impressive and meritorious) causes thereof. 4. The ends which it aimed at; together with the fruits and effects of it. 5. Some practical influences, which the consideration thereof may and should have on us.

1. As for the nature of it we must affirm, and believe assuredly, that it was a true and proper death; in kind not different from that death, to the which all we mortal creatures are by the law and condition of our nature subject, and which we must all sometime undergo; for, 'What man is he that liveth and shall not see death; that shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?' that death, which is signified by cessation from vital operations; (of all motions natural or voluntary, of all sense and knowlege, appetite and passion;) that death, which is caused by violent disunion, or dislocation, by distempering, or however indisposing the parts, humors, spirits of the body, so that the soul can no longer in them and by them continue to exercise those functions, for which its conjunction thereto was intended, and cannot therefore fitly reside therein; that death, which is supposed to consist in the dissolution of that vital band, whatever it be, whereby the soul is linked and united to the body; or in that which is thereon consequent, the separation, department, and absence of the soul from the body; each of that couple, on their divorce, returning home to their original principles, as it were; the body 'to the earth from whence it was taken,' and 'the spirit unto God who gave it.' Such causes antecedent are specified in the story; such signs following are plainly implied, such a state is expressed in the very terms, whereby our death is commonly signified: the same extremity of anguish, the same dilaceration of parts, the same effusion of blood, which would destroy our vital temper, quench our natural heat, stop our animal motions, exhaust our spirits, and force out our breath,

did work on him; necessarily producing the like effects on him, as who had assumed the common imperfections and infirmities of our nature; in regard to which violences inflicted on him he is said, ἀποκτείνεσθαι, to be killed or slain; διαχειρίζεσθαι, to be dispatched; ἀναιρεῖσθαι, to be made away; ἀπολέσθαι, to perish, or be destroyed; ἐξολοθρεύεσθαι, to be cut off, as it is in Daniel; σφάττεσθαι, to be slaughtered; θύεσθαι, to be sacrificed; which words do all of them fully import a real and proper death to have ensued on those violent usages toward him.

And by the ordinary signs of death, apparent to sense, the soldiers judged him dead; and therefore, ὡς εἶδον αὐτὸν ἤδη τεθνηκότα, 'seeing him already dead, they forbare to break his legs:' by the same all the world was satisfied thereof; both his spiteful enemies, that stood with delight, waiting for this utmost success of their malicious endeavors to destroy him; and his loving friends, who with compassionate respect attended on him through the course of his suffering; and those who were ready to perform their last offices of kindness in procuring a decent interment of his body.

His transition also, and abiding in this state, are expressed by terms declaring the propriety of his death, and its agreement with our death. St. Mark telleth us that ἐξέπνευσε, *animam efflavit*, he expired, breathed out his soul or his last breath; St. Matthew, ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα, *animam egit*, he let go his spirit, or 'gave up the ghost;' St. John, παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα, he delivered up his spirit into God's hand; the which St. Luke expresseth done with a formal resignation; 'Father,' said he, 'into thy hands I commend (or I depose) my spirit;' he doth also himself frequently express his dying by 'laying down his life,' and 'bestowing it as a ransom,' which showeth him really to have parted with it.

His death also (as ours is wont to be denoted by like phrases) is termed ἔξοδος, *excessus e vivis*, a going out of life, or from the society of men; (for Moses and Elias are said to tell, τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem;) and μετάβασις, a passing over, or translation from this into another world; ('When,' saith St. John, 'Jesus knew that his time was come, ἵνα μεταβῇ, that he should depart

from this world.') His death also was enigmatically described by the destruction or demolishment of his bodily temple, answerable to those circumlocutions concerning our ordinary death; 'the dissolution of our earthly house of tabernacle,' or transitory abode, in St. Paul; the ἀπόθεσις τοῦ σκηνώματος, laying down, or putting off our tabernacle, in St. Peter.

It were also not hard to show how all other phrases and circumlocutions, by which human death is expressed, either in holy Scripture or in usual language, or among philosophers and more accurate speakers, are either expressly applied, or by consequence are plainly applicable to the death of our Saviour; such, for instance, as these in Scripture; ἀνάλυσις, being resolved into our principles, or the returning of them thither whence they came; ἀπόλυσις, a being freed, licensed, or dismissed hence; ἐκδημία ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, a going or abode abroad; a peregrination, or absentment from the body; an ἔκδυσις, putting off, or being divested of the body; an ἀφανισμὸς, disappearance or cessation in appearance to be; a going hence, and not being seen; a falling on sleep, resting from our labors, sleeping with our fathers, being added, and gathered to our fathers; being taken, or cut off out of the land of the living; going down into the pit; lying down, resting, sleeping in the dust; making our bed in darkness: these and the like phrases occurring in Scripture (which might be paralleled out of vulgar speech, and out of learned discourses) describing either the entrance into, or the abiding in the state of that death, to which all men are obnoxious, might easily be showed applicable to the death of our Saviour. His resurrection doth imply the reality of his death; for otherwise it had not been miraculous, it had not been a pledge of our resurrection. But I will not farther needlessly insist on explicating or confirming a point so clear, and never misunderstood, or questioned, except by some wild and presumptuous heretics.

Our Saviour's death then was a true, real, and proper death, suitable to that frail, passible, and mortal nature, which he vouchsafed to undergo for us; to the condition of 'sinful flesh, in the likeness whereof he did appear;' severing his soul and body, and remitting them to their original sources; his passion was indeed *ultimum supplicium*, an extreme capital punish-

ment, the highest, in the last result, which in this world either the fiercest injustice or the severest justice could inflict: for, to kill the body is, as our Lord himself taught, the utmost limit of all human power and malice; the most and worst that man can do; they have not περισσότερόν τι, any thing beyond that which they can attempt on us; and so far did they proceed with our Lord. Such was the nature of his death; such indeed as was requisite for the accomplishment of the ends and effects designed thereby.

2. Let us now consider those peculiar adjuncts and respects of our Lord's death, (together with his whole passion, whereof his death was the chief part and final completion,) the which do commend it to our regard, and amplify the worth thereof: such are, 1. Its being a result of God's eternal resolution and decree. 2. Its being a matter of free consent and compact between God the Father and his only Son. 3. Its being anciently prefigured and predicted. 4. Its being executed by God's hand and providence guiding and governing it; and by man's action concurring. 5. Its being the death of a person so holy and innocent, so high and excellent, of God's Son, of God the Son.

1. It was a result of God's eternal counsel and decree; it was no casual event, no expedient suddenly devised, or slipt from providence, but a well-laid design, from all eternity contrived by divine wisdom, resolved on by divine goodness. As God did (by the incomprehensible perfection of his nature) from thence foresee our lapse aud misery, so he did as soon determine our remedy and means of salvation. As the whole of that mysterious dispensation concerning Christ, so especially did this main part thereof proceed κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων, 'according to an eternal purpose,' as St. Paul speaketh; for our Saviour was a Lamb slain (in designation irrevocable slain) from the foundation of the world; as it is said in the Revelation: and, 'We,' saith St. Peter, 'were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, προεγνωσμένου μὲν, foreordained indeed before the foundation of the world:' and our Saviour went, as he telleth us himself, to suffer, κατὰ τὸ ὡρισμένον, 'according to what was determined:' and, 'It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowlege of

God,' saith St. Peter, 'that he was delivered up into those wicked hands' that slew him; nor did the conspiracy of 'Herod and Pilate, with the nation and people of the Jews,' effect any thing about it, beyond ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ, καὶ ἡ βουλὴ Θεοῦ προώρισε γενέσθαι, 'whatever the hand and counsel of God (or God's effectual purpose) had predetermined to come to pass.' Such an especial care and providence of God concerning this matter, so expressly and so frequently recommended to our observation, do argue the very great moment and high worth thereof. What God declareth himself to have had so early and earnest a care of, must be matter of highest consideration and importance.

2. It was a matter of free consent and compact between God and his Son. God did freely and graciously (out of merciful regard to our welfare) proffer, that if he would please to undertake to redeem his (lost and enslaved) creature, an honorable and comfortable success to his enterprise; that he would accept his performances, and that the design should prosper in his hand: he did willingly embrace the proposal, and applied himself to the performance: 'When thou shalt make thy soul an offering for sin, thou shalt see thy seed, and prolong thy days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in thy hand: thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul, and shalt be satisfied;' that, in the prophet's language, was God's proposition: and, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;' that was our Saviour's reply in correspondence and consent thereto. God, in consideration of what our Lord would obediently suffer, did, as our Saviour telleth us, διατίθεσθαι βασιλείαν, 'covenant to him a kingdom;' committing a sovereign authority, assigning an universal dominion to him; in virtue of which transaction it was that 'Jesus, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honor;' that 'because he poured out his soul unto death, God divided him a portion with the great;' that 'he being obedient to the death, God exalted him, and gave him a name above all names.' In this regard are God's elect and faithful people said to be given unto him as a retribution to him, 'who gave himself for them;' ('Thine they were,' saith our Lord to his Father, 'and thou gavest them me;') hence are we said to be 'bought with a price;' hence is 'the church purchased by his blood:' there

was therefore a covenant and bargain driven between God and his Son concerning this affair; and of huge consideration surely must that affair be, wherein such persons do so deeply interest themselves, trafficking, and, as it were, standing on terms with one another.

3. That the great excellency and efficacy of our Saviour's death and passion might appear, it was by manifold types foreshadowed, and in divers prophecies foretold. Indeed most of the famous passages of providence (especially the signal afflictions of eminent persons representing our Saviour) do seem to have been prefigurations of, or preludes to, his passion. The blood of the righteous protomartyr Abel, shed by an envious brother, for acceptable obedience performed by him to God's will, and crying to heaven, might prefigure that blood which cried also, although with another voice, 'speaking better things than the blood of Abel;' not sad complaints, and suits for vengeance, but sweet entreaties and intercessions for mercy. Isaac, the only son, the son of promise, his oblation in purpose, or death in parable, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh, did plainly represent our Saviour, the promised seed, his being really offered, and afterward miraculously restored to life. Joseph's being sold and put into slavery by his envious brethren, being slanderously accused, and shut in prison, ('whose feet they hurt with fetters; the iron entered into his soul;') and this by God's disposal, in order to his exaltation; and that he might be a means of preserving life, and preparing a convenient habitation for the children of Israel, doth well resemble him who 'by suffering entered into his glory;' who 'thereby being perfected, became author of salvation to his brethren,' all true Israelites; who went to prepare mansions of rest and light, a heavenly Goshen, for them. David's persecutions foregoing his royal dignity and prosperous state; which he expresseth in such strains as these; 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; the sorrows of hell compassed me about, and the snares of death prevented me;' how they may adumbrate the more real extremities of our Lord's afflictions, previous to his glorious exaltation, I leave you to consider; as also the rest of such passages, having a mysterious importance accommodable to this purpose. However, all the sa-

crifices of old instituted by God, we may with fuller confidence affirm to have been chiefly preparatory unto and prefigurative of this most true and perfect sacrifice; by virtue whereof indeed those ὑποδείγματα and σκιαὶ, umbratic representations (or insinuations) did obtain their substance, validity, and effect: if they did not signify this in design, they could signify nothing in effect; for as 'without shedding of blood there was no remission,' (God's anger would not be appeased, nor his justice satisfied without it; it being blood, which, according to God's prescription, did 'make atonement for the soul,') as the appointment of those sacrifices did speak and signify; so 'it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin;' that those 'legal gifts and sacrifices should perfect the conscience of him that did the service;' that is, should intirely assure him of pardon and impunity, or raise in him a strong and clear hope of God's favor: the lives of beasts were not in value answerable, nor could fitly be subrogated instead of men's souls, which had offended, and thence were liable to death; the effusion of their blood could not reasonably satisfy a man's conscience, sensible of guilt and fearful of God's displeasure, that by it God was fully appeased; they must therefore refer unto a κρείττων θυσία, 'a more excellent sacrifice;' one more sufficient in itself, and more acceptable to God; in virtue of which, and in regard thereto, sin might be thoroughly expiated, God's wrath might be propitiated, divine vengeance might be removed, the mind of man therefore might be comforted and contented. The high priest's entrance once a year into the holy of holies, 'not without blood to atone for his own and the people's ignorances,' (or miscarriages,) did imply that our great High Priest should make one bloody atonement for the offences of mankind, and, passing through the veil of mortal flesh, should enter into the true *sanctum sanctorum* of heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us; exhibiting the virtue of his meritorious passion, together with his effectual intercession for mercy toward us. Especially the paschal lamb, in its substance, (as a lamb, meek and gentle) in its quality, (as without blemish and spot, pure and innocent,) in its manner of preparation and dressing, (being killed by all the assembly, having its blood sprinkled on the doors of every house, being roasted with

fire, having bitter herbs for its sauce,) with other observable circumstances about it, was a most apposite emblem of Christ our passover; who not only by his death did signify and mind us of, but did really achieve our deliverance from the mystical Egypt, our state of spiritual bondage. So did ancient types exhibit and represent; plain predictions also did express the same death and suffering of our Lord; 'Those things,' saith St. Peter, 'which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled;' not one prophet only, not some few; but all, saith he, (that is, either plainly or covertly, either directly or by consequence,) have foreshowed (or foretold) it: it is our negligence or stupidity if we do not discern it in them: as our Lord intimated when he thus spake to his disciples; 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ought not Christ (ought he not, according to their presignifications and predictions) to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?' That David, an illustrious representative of the Messias, doth often describe as belonging to himself, mortal agonies and sufferings, not well applicable κατὰ λέξιν, or in direct historical meaning, to his own person, and therefore in reason, according to a more high and perfect sense, to be understood of the Messias himself; that Daniel plainly foretelleth that in a certain time the Messias should be cut off; that Isaiah doth in several places insinuate, and in the famous 53rd chapter of his prophecy doth clearly describe the manner and kind of our Saviour's passion, is so evident, that even those of the Jewish doctors who have been most earnest opposers of our Lord, have been forced to acknowlege that there is to be as well one Messias to suffer as another to prosper, and reign in glory; being so gross as not to apprehend, or so perverse as not to acknowlege, the consistency between antecedent suffering and consequent glory; between a night of darkness and sorrow, and a day of light and joy breaking out from it; not being able or willing to distinguish between an external pomp in this world, and an external majesty in the future state. But unto us God's so forward care, 'by the spirit of Christ in his prophets, προμαρτύρεσθαι, to forewitness (as St. Peter speaketh, or to testify before hand) the sufferings of our Saviour, and the glories suc-

ceeding,' doth imply with what diligence of attention we should regard, with what firmness of faith we should embrace, with what satisfaction of heart we should entertain this great and admirable dispensation.

4. We may consider that this death was compassed by God's especial providence directing and disposing it, although not without the active concurrence of men: the treacherous disposition and covetous appetite of Judas; the envious humor and blind zeal of the scribes and priests; the wanton fickleness and wild rudeness of the people; the fearful and selfish temper of the governor, were but instruments, whereby God's own hand did inflict this sore chastisement on his Son for us: it was the Lord that 'laid on him the iniquities of us all; by God he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted;' Pilate, it is said, had no power to do what he did, 'but what was given him from above;' the Jews with their rulers proceeded rashly and ignorantly; otherwise, as St. Paul affirmeth, 'they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;' but God advisedly, as St. Peter told them, 'did accomplish it;' 'He did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us:' he, as it were, suspended his bowels of pity toward him, he withdrew his face of kindness from him, out of compassion and benignity toward us; he used him severely, that he might deal favorably with us.

Yet did man actively concur therein; all mankind in a sort, by its representatives, was involved, as principally in the guilt for which, so in the guilt by which he suffered; there was a general conspiracy of Jew and Gentile practised against the life of their common Saviour. 'Of a truth,' saith St. Peter, 'against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, were gathered together both Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and with the people of Israel:' in the Jews the horrid ingratitude of men, in the Gentiles their wretched infirmity did appear; the which, by their active efficacy toward our Lord's death, did signify the meritorious influence they also had on it; that it was our iniquity and corruption which did cause it: so as a work of divine Providence, (the most admirable work ever accomplished by Providence,) as an act of human pravity, (the

most heinous act ever committed by men,) is the death of our Lord considerable.

5. But more immediately the quality and condition of our Saviour's person do most commend to us, and advance the worth of his death: if, as the psalmist saith, 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;' if the spotless candor and unblemished integrity of a lamb do make its blood precious, and qualify it for an acceptable sacrifice; how valuable to God shall be the death of a person so perfectly holy and innocent; who did not so much as know sin; in whose mouth no guile was ever found; who was holy, harmless, undefiled, removed (at infinite distance removed) from sinners; who 'needed not to offer sacrifices for his own sins;' whose death therefore for others was apt to be more available and acceptable! Again, if the life of a king be (as king David's people told him) 'worth ten thousand lives;' if it be a most enormous crime and highest treason to imagine his death; how valuable must be the death of a person so incomparably transcendent in dignity, of the Lord of glory, of the Prince of life! 'Ye denied the holy and the just One; ye slew the Prince of life:' 'They crucified the Lord of glory:' so the Apostles do aggravate the business. But a farther height, a perfect immensity indeed, of worth and efficacy, must needs accrue to the death of our Saviour, from his being the Son of God; from his being God, (one and the same in nature with his almighty and all-glorious Father:) for it is 'the blood of Christ, the Son of God, which purgeth us from all sin;' yea, God himself did, as St. Paul saith in the Acts, 'purchase the church with his own blood;' it is 'the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity:' and, 'Hereby,' saith St. John, 'perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' That the immortal God should die, that the Most High should be debased to so low a condition, as it cannot be heard without wonder, so it could not be undertaken without huge reason, nor accomplished without mighty effect: well indeed might such a condescension serve to advance us from the basest state to any pitch of honor and happiness; well might one drop of that

royal blood of heaven suffice to purchase many worlds, to ransom innumerable lives of men, to expiate an infinity of sins, however grievous and foul. But so much for the peculiar adjuncts and respects of our Lord's death.

3. Let us now consider the causes and principles whence it proceeded; which moved God to determine it, and our Lord to undertake it; they were in both acts most voluntary and free: of the Father it is said, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him;' and, 'Behold,' saith our Lord in the Psalm, 'I come to do thy will, O God;' that is, as the Apostle to the Hebrews expoundeth it, to offer, not the blood of beasts in sacrifice, but my own body, according to thy will and appointment: and, 'This commandment,' saith he in St. John, 'I received of my Father, to lay down my life:' and, 'The cup,' saith he again, 'which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' so on the Father's part, and on our Savour's likewise, it was no less voluntary; for, 'None,' saith he, 'taketh my life from me,' (that is, it is not from any necessity or compulsion that I do part with it,) 'but I lay it down of myself,' (with absolute choice and freedom;) 'I have power to lay it down, and I have power to resume it:' and, 'The bread,' saith he, 'which I shall give, is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world:' 'The Son of man came to give his life as a ransom for many.' The yielding his flesh to death, the paying his life a ransom, were deeds of gift, perfectly free: and that both in regard to God the Father and the Son this performance was voluntary, St. Paul together thus expresseth; 'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:' so this death issued from the joint wills of God and his Son. But as the volitions of every intelligent and wise agent do always proceed from some principle inclining, or are directed according to some impulsive cause moving to them, so divers principles and causes of these voluntary acts are declared in Scripture; the chief of which are reducible to these two; one internally disposing God's goodness; the other externally inviting man's distress. The case stood thus: mankind lying in a sad and forlorn estate, oppressed by Satan, enslaved to sin, subject to a rigorous law, exposed to the severity of justice, tormented by the sense of guilt, fearful of divine

wrath and due vengeance; in short, by the sentence of heaven and by the suffrage of conscience within, condemned to punishment unavoidable, and to intolerable misery; man, I say, lying in so desperately uncomfortable a condition, God's infinite goodness regarded his poor creature, his bowels of compassion yearned toward him, a desire of relieving sprang up in his will; thence was he moved to provide such a remedy, suitable and sufficient for his delivery; for the removing all those mischiefs and curing all those distempers: the main source of all this wonderful performance, (as of all other providential dispensations and works, *ad extra*,) was that most excellent perfection of God, which, in regard to this matter, is sometime termed χρηστότης, benignity, or bounty; implying the great benefit and advantage we do thence receive; sometimes grace, or favor, signifying the pure freeness in dispensing it, without any design of profit to himself, or any desert on our part, ('By the grace of God he tasted death for every man;') sometimes mercy, denoting our bad deserts, or obnoxiousness to justice and punishment; sometimes pity, signifying the great need we had thereof, by reason of our extreme distress and misery. Commonly also it is, by the most obliging and endearing name styled love, and philanthropy, intimating the earnest regard and benevolence God had to us as his creatures, and as capable of being benefited and bettered by him; 'Herein,' saith St. Paul, 'God commended his love toward us, in that we being yet sinners, Christ died for us;' and, 'God,' saith St. John, 'loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for us;' and, 'God,' saith our Lord himself, 'so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son—that the world might be saved by him.'

By the way it is worth observing that there is distinguishable a threefold love of God toward men, intimated in Scripture. 1. A general love to mankind, antecedent to the sending our Lord, and his performances, being the ground of God's designing them; which may be called a love of pity, or mercy toward poor man lying under condemnation and distress; this is that φιλανθρωπία τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ, 'philanthropy of God our Saviour, which appeared in saving us, (that is, in granting us the capacity and means of salvation,) not by works of righteousness, which we had done, but by his mercy;'

the love which 'he commended, in that while we were sinners Christ died for us.' 2. A love, immediately consequent on our Lord's performances and sufferings, and procured by them; whereby God is so far pleased with men, and reconciled to the world, that he 'desireth all men's salvation,' and offereth to them terms and means thereof; in regard to which our Lord is said to be the Saviour of the world, and Redeemer of all men; of which love St. Paul speaketh, when he saith, that 'being enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' and that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins;' and that 'God having made peace by the blood of his cross, did reconcile by him all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven;' the which may be called a love of reconciliation and favor; or the grace of God, which came by Jesus Christ.

3. A peculiar love of friendship and complacence, which God beareth toward all those who do sincerely turn and steadfastly adhere to him, repenting of their sins and embracing the gospel, and persisting in obedience to his laws; such God is every where represented to affect with tenderest love, as his faithful servants, his good friends and dear children; being especially the Saviour of them: this distinction is observable for our better understanding the passages of Scripture concerning this matter; in which God is sometime represented as bearing a general love to all men, sometime as more especially loving the faithful and good men.

The like principles and impulsive causes are said to move our Lord to undertake and undergo death for us; it was goodness and love toward us that inclined him thereto: 'Christ,' saith St. Paul, 'loved us, and delivered up himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God:' 'He loved the church and delivered up himself for it.' 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood:' 'Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:' 'I live,' saith St. Paul again, 'by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

Such were the principles disposing, and causes in a sort moving; to which we may add our sins, as the meritorious

causes of our Saviour's death; 'He died for our sins;' 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.' He died for us, not only as for men, not only as for wretched men, but as for unjust and sinful men; as for enemies, and strangers to God; such as had grievously displeased God, had incurred heinous guilt, had deserved, and were become obnoxious to severest punishment; so standing in need of reconcilement, propitiation, and redemption. Had we been innocent and guiltless, there had wanted sufficient cause, or just reason for his death; God would not have been angry, justice could have had no pretence, or hold; we should not have been liable to suffer ourselves, nor could he have suffered for us. Death is the debt, or wages due to sin; which he therefore paid, because we owed it, and could not discharge it: 'All we,' as it is said in the Prophet, 'have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord (therefore) hath laid on him the iniquity of us all:' our sins were not only indirect or remote occasions of his death, but did procure it in way of desert: even as they would have been meritorious causes of our death, had he not undertaken for us, so were they the like causes of his death, who died for us, and in our stead; who was made sin (that is, a sinner, or a sacrifice) for us; who gave himself ἀντίλυτρον, a ransom instead of us all; paying his blood a price for us, and redeeming us thereby from all the penalties and inconveniences we were liable to; 'buying us from the curse, by becoming a curse for us;' who 'had on him the chastisement of our peace;' and 'did offer up his soul an offering and sacrifice for our sins;' thereby expiating them, propitiating God's wrath, and reconciling God unto us, purging us from guilt, and procuring intire remission for our sins; the which considerations do sufficiently argue our sins, in way of desert, to have been the causes of his death.

4. Now for the ends which our Lord's death aimeth at, and the effects which it produceth, (these we join, because in reality they are the same,) they, in Scripture reckoning and expression, are various and many: the most general are these, comprehending divers others subordinate to them.

1. The illustration of God's glory, by demonstrating and displaying therein his most excellent attributes and perfections;

so doth St. Paul teach us; 'Whom God,' saith he, 'hath set forth a propitiation by faith in his blood, *εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ*, for a demonstration of his righteousness;' that is, as I take it, of his goodness, his justice, his fidelity, his constancy, of all those commendable perfections, which are expressed in dealing with others; and our Lord, his passion being instantly to follow, made this reflexion; 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;' and, 'I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' God did therein show himself most highly good and gracious, in so providing for the welfare of those who deserved nothing of him, who deserved ill of him, who had offended and injured him very heinously: he manifested himself most strictly just, in not suffering iniquity to go unpunished, but rather than so, exposing his own dear Son to punishment, and in him choosing himself to suffer; he declared his wisdom in contriving so admirable an expedient, whereby both his goodness might be exercised, and his justice not infringed; he showed his veracity, fidelity, and constancy, in executing by his providence what he before had designed and promised, although so grievous and bitter to the Son of his love: he therein also laid a ground of declaring his almighty power, in raising him from the dead, as likewise of his goodness and justice in exalting him: thus by our Saviour's death was the divine glory much illustrated, and our good consequently promoted; for that we therein contemplating him so amiable for goodness, so terrible for justice, so venerable for all excellency, may be induced thence to love him, to dread him, to worship and reverence him, as it becometh us, and as it is necessary for us in order to our happiness.

2. The dignifying and exaltation of our Lord himself; by acquiring unto him in a manner a new right unto and instating him in an universal dominion, in a transcendent glory, in perfect joy accruing to him by remuneration for so excellent an instance of submission and obedience to God's will. This is that which our Lord foresaw and foretold; 'If God was glorified in him, then will God glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him:' and, 'To this end,' saith St.

Paul, 'Christ died, that he might be the Lord of the dead and living:' and, 'For the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honor,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews: and, 'He was obedient to the death, therefore God exalted him:' and, 'The Prince of our salvation was perfected by suffering:' and, 'For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross:' and, 'He,' said the prophet of him, 'shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied:' and, 'Worthy,' say the heavenly host in the Apocalypse, 'is the Lamb that is slain,' (worthy is he, for that he was slain, and did redeem us to God by his blood,) 'to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.'

3. The salvation of mankind; the which he was designed to procure by his death, and in many respects he did promote it thereby.

He did it by appeasing that wrath of God which he naturally beareth toward iniquity, and reconciling God to men, who by sin were alienated from him; by procuring a favorable disposition and intentions of grace toward us. 'While we were sinners,' saith St. Paul, 'Christ died for us,' (and sinners, or wicked men, God cannot like or endure: 'Thou art not,' saith the Psalmist, 'a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee; the foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity:' and, 'The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth;' yet for us, being such, Christ died, removing thereby that just hatred and displeasure; as St. Paul presently after expresseth and expoundeth it; 'When,' saith he, 'we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son:') and otherwhere, 'God,' saith he, 'was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;' the non-imputation of our sins is expressed as a singular effect, an instance, an argument of his being in mind reconciled and favorably disposed toward us: and again; 'He died to reconcile both (Jews and Gentiles) unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby;' that is, God being thereby reconciled to all people, they became thence united together in the common relation of friends and fellow-servants to God; be-

coming, as it there follows, 'fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' (or allied unto him by spiritual relations.)

Again, it furthered our salvation by purchasing the remission of our sins, and justification of our persons; our freedom from condemnation and punishment, our appearance as upright, and acceptable in God's sight; on the conditions of faith and repentance propounded in the gospel; in regard to which effects he is said thereby to redeem us from our sins, to bear them, to take them away, to expiate them, to cleanse, to purge, to sanctify us from them: 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who shall condemn them? It is Christ that died;' that is, Christ's death hath freed them from all liableness to guilt and condemnation. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;' that is, he by undergoing an accursed kind of death hath purchased an indemnity and impunity for the transgressors of God's law: and, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath;' that is, from the effects of God's just displeasure, condemnation, and punishment: and, 'In whom,' saith St. Paul again clearly, 'we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:' and, 'My blood,' saith our Lord, 'is the blood of the new testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins:' and, 'Christ,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'was once offered to bear the sin of many,' (or of the many, the multitude of men) 'Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, *εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας*, for the abolition of sin by the sacrifice of himself:' and, 'Behold,' saith St. John the Baptist, 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world:' and, 'The blood of Christ doth,' saith St. John, 'cleanse us from all sin:' 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood:' 'He is a propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world:' and, 'Jesus, that by his blood he might sanctify the people, did suffer out of the gate:' 'He delivered himself up for the Church, that he might sanctify it—that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

Our Lord also by his death procured our salvation, as having thereby purchased for us means sufficient to free us from the power and dominion of sin, to purify our hearts, and sanctify our lives; for, 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:' and, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might redeem us from this present evil world:' and, 'We were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver, or with gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, from our vain conversation, delivered from our fathers:' and, 'He by his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness:' 'We are with him dead to sin; our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.'

In subordination to, coincidence or concurrence with, the principal designs and effects, our Lord also died for the reparation of God's honor, which we by contempt of his authority and violation of his law had impaired, but our Saviour by so signal an obedience thereto did repair; for the recovery of God's right, which was infringed by withdrawing so great and noble a part of his creation from its due allegiance and service; the which he recovered and restored to him; for the satisfaction to God's justice, provoked by so heinous impieties and iniquities; the which was abundantly performed by so infinitely valuable a compensation and sacrifice offered thereto.

Also for ratification of the new covenant between God and us; whence his blood is called, the blood of the covenant, the blood of the new testament.

For the pacifying and reconciling all things in heaven and earth; removing all causes of dissension and distance; inducing obligations to concord and charity.

For pulling out the sting, and removing the terrors of death; 'destroying (or defeating) him that had the power of death, and delivering them who through the fear of death are all their life-time subject to death.'

For the suppressing, vanquishing, and triumphing over the powers of hell and darkness, the which he did, as St. Paul

telleth us, achieve on his cross: and by his death he telleth us that the prince of this world was condemned, and cast out.

For engaging us to the practice of all righteousness and obedience, (especially to the most excellent, high, and hard parts thereof, charity, humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, utmost constancy and perseverance,) both from our obligation in regard to what he suffered for us, and in imitation of his example; for, 'We should run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame:' and, 'Christ having suffered for us in the flesh, we should,' saith St. Peter, 'arm ourselves with the same mind,—so as no longer to live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God.'

Lastly, for attestation unto and confirmation of divine truth; sealing by his blood that heavenly doctrine which he taught, and 'witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession:' he was the Prince of martyrs; who, as 'he for this end,' as he told Pilate, 'was born, and for this end came into the world, that he might bear witness to the truth,' so he especially did accomplish that glorious design by his death; 'enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself, resisting unto blood in combating against sin;' by his blood indeed all other witnesses of truth did, as it is said in the Revelation, accomplish their warfare, and obtain victory: his blood purchased for them their resolution and strength; his promises supported them, his example did animate them, to the profession and maintenance of truth, in the greatest dangers and most violent assaults.

Such ends did the death of our Lord regard, such fruits did grow from it, which the time permitteth us but thus cursorily to touch.

5. Now for the practical influences the consideration of this point should have on us, they are many and great; but we now can only name, or insinuate them.

1. It should beget in us highest degrees of love and gratitude toward God and toward our Saviour, in regard to this highest expression of love and instance of beneficence toward

us. Greater love God could not have showed, than in thus destinating and offering up his only dearest Son to death (a most painful and shameful death) for our sake; and, 'Greater love,' he told us himself, 'than this hath no man, than that one should lay down his life for his friends;' no man hath greater, except himself, who even laid his life down for his enemies and persecutors: and love so incomparably, so extremely great, doth surely require correspondent degrees of love and thankfulness.

2. It should raise in us great faith and hope in God, excluding all distrust and despair, that God will not bestow on us whatever is needfully or conveniently good for us; for, 'He,' as St. Paul argueth, 'who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

3. Particularly, it should comfort us, and satisfy our conscience in regard to the guilt of our sins, however contracted; supposing that we do heartily repent of them; for that 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' and that, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;' by virtue of his death we sincerely repenting are freed from all condemnation, we truly believing have a firm and sure peace with God: 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth, seeing it is Christ that hath died?' We are very blameably incredulous, if, having such an assurance from God, and such an engagement on him, we distrust his mercy.

4. It discovereth unto us the heinousness of our sins, and thence should breed in us a vehement detestation, together with a great dread of them; a detestation of them, as having provoked God to such a pitch of displeasure, causing him to deal thus severely with his own beloved Son; as having brought so heavy suffering on a person so infinitely high in dignity, excellent in worth, kind and gracious to us; a dread of them, as exposing us, if we do not avoid and forsake them, to the most grievous pains and miseries; for, 'if these things were done to a green tree,' (if such punishments were inflicted on one so innocent, so worthy, so little obnoxious to the fire of

divine wrath and vengeance,) 'what shall be done to the dry?' that is, what will become of us, who are so guilty, so combustible by that fire, if we by presumptuous commission of sin, and impenitent continuance therein, do incense God against us?

5. It should work in us a kindly contrition and remorse for our sins, which were indeed the murderers of so good a friend and loving a Saviour: others were but instruments; they were the principal authors of his death; they most truly betrayed him, they accused him, they condemned him, they lifted him up to the accursed tree; they moved God, and enabled men to inflict this horrible punishment on him.

6. It should deter us from them, and engage us most carefully to avoid them, as those which in a sort do exact another death from him; 'crucifying him afresh,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews telleth us, 'vilifying and defiling the precious blood of the covenant,' (as he likewise teacheth.)

7. It should engage us to a patient submission and resignation of ourselves to the will and providence of God; 'forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, we should,' as St. Peter adviseth, 'arm ourselves likewise with the same mind:' and, 'Let,' exhorteth St. Paul, 'the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:' we should not disdain, nor on any account be displeased or unwilling in bearing any cross or affliction, to follow the pattern of our great Master; 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.'

8. It doth also oblige us to the deepest mortification in conformity to his death: we should be with him (or after him) crucified to the lusts and affections of the flesh, to the fashions, glories, desires, and delights of the world; 'knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.'

9. It is also a strong engagement to the fullest measure of charity toward our brethren; for, 'If,' saith St. John, 'God so loved us, (as to give his own Son to die for us,) then ought we to love one another,' in a degree answerable to such an

obligation and pattern: 'If,' addeth the same Apostle, 'he laid down his life for us, then ought we also to lay down our lives for the brethren.'

10. In fine, we hence appear obliged to yield up ourselves wholly to the service of our Saviour; to the promoting of his interest and glory: since we, as St. Paul admonisheth us, 'are not our own, being bought with a price;' and must 'therefore glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's,' by a purchase so dear and precious; since, as that Apostle again mindeth us, 'Christ died for all, that they which live might not live to themselves, but to him that died for them;' this being, let us not wrong 'the Lord who bought us,' by withholding his due, the price of his dearest blood; let us not abuse him, by defeating his purpose, no less advantageous to ourselves, than honorable to him; but as by being our Saviour he hath deserved to be our Lord, so in effect let him ever be; let us ever believe him so in our heart, confess him with our mouth, and avow him in our practice; which that we may do, God of his infinite mercy, by his holy grace, vouchsafe unto us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

'Now, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.'

'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.'

'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXVIII.

ACTS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 27.

THIS article is of later standing in the Creed. Its meaning has in all times been much debated. This is confessedly difficult and obscure: but to comply with expectation, some things conducive to its explanation are attempted.

Concerning the words, *he descended into hell*, there may be a threefold inquiry: this proposed.

I. Concerning their meaning, intended by those who inserted them in the Creed. This resolved or removed by various speculations.

II. Concerning the most proper signification of them; that is, what may be meant by *he descended;* and what by *hell.* Consideration of these points.

III. Concerning the meaning of which they are capable in consistency with truth. It is herein shown that the most advisable way is to take the words, as implying, *that our Saviour did really pass into the state of death.* Objections against this interpretation answered. Farther observations on the propriety of it. Certain conceits of different commentators on this passage exploded. Conclusion.

He descended into Hell.

SERMON XXVIII.

ACTS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 27.

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.

ST. PETER in his sermon to the Jews cites these words of the psalmist to prove the resurrection of Christ. And because on these words our Saviour's descent into hell seems to be grounded, I shall from this text take occasion to discourse of this article of the Creed, Κατελθόντα εἰς ἅδου, 'He descended into hell.'

This article is of later standing in the Creed, and doth not appear to have had place in any of the most ancient ones public or private, excepting that of Aquileia; into which also perhaps it might have been inserted not long before Ruffinus's time; and the meaning thereof hath always (both in more ancient times among the Fathers, and afterwards among the Schoolmen, and lately among modern divines) been much debated, having yielded occasion to many prolix and elaborate discourses: to recite the several opinions about it, or different explications thereof, with the reasons produced to maintain or disprove them, were a matter of greater time and pains than I can well afford; and to decide the controversies about it, a matter of greater difficulty than I could hope to achieve. Wherefore (both on these accounts, and because I rather choose to insist on matters more clear in their nature, and more practical in consequence) I should be willing altogether to waive this obscure and perplexed subject; yet however somewhat to comply with expectation, I shall touch briefly on some things seeming conducible to the clearing or to the ending of the controversies about it.

Now whereas there may be a threefold inquiry; one concerning the meaning of these words ('he descended into hell') intended by those who inserted them; another concerning the most proper signification of the words themselves; a third concerning the meaning they are in consistency with truth capable of;

I. The first I resolve, or rather remove, by saying, it seems needless to dispute what meaning they, who placed the words here, did intend; since, 1. It is possible, and by many like instances might be declared so, and perhaps not unlikely, that they might both themselves on probable grounds believe, and for plausible ends propound to the belief of others, this proposition, without apprehending any distinct sense thereof; as we believe all the Scriptures, and commend them to the faith of others, without understanding the sense of many passages therein: and since, 2. Perhaps they might by them intend some notion not certain or not true, following some conceits then passable among divers, but not built on any sure foundation, (like that of the millennium; and the necessity of infants communicating, &c. which were anciently in great vogue, but are now discarded:) and since, 3. To speak roundly, their bare authority, whoever they were, (for that doth not appear,) could not be such as to oblige us to be of their minds, whatever they did mean or intend; they perhaps were such to whom we might owe much reverence, but should not be obliged to yield intire credence to their opinions. But farther, 4. Were I bound to speak my sense, I should say that, supposing they had any distinct meaning, they did intend to affirm that our Saviour's soul did, by a true and proper kind of motion, descend into the regions infernal, or beneath the earth; where they conceived the souls of men were detained: for this appears to have been the more general and current opinion of those times, which it is probable they did comply with herein, whencesoever fetched, however grounded.

II. As to the second inquiry, concerning the signification of the words, what may be meant by 'he descended;' whether our Saviour himself, according to his humanity, or his soul, or his body, called *he* by synecdoche: what by descended, whether (to omit that sense which makes the whole sentence

an allegory, denoting the sufferance of infernal or hellish pains and sorrows, as too wide from the purpose; whether, I say) by descending may be signified a proper local motion toward such a term, or an action so called in respect to some such motion accompanying it; or a virtual motion by power and efficacy in places below: what by hell, whether a state of being or a place; if a place, whether that where bodies are reposed, or that to which souls do go; and if a place of souls, whether the place of good and happy souls, or that of bad and miserable ones; or indifferently, and in common of both those; for such a manifold ambiguity these words have, or are made to have; and each of these senses are embraced and contended for: I shall not examine any of them, nor farther meddle in the matter, than by saying,

1. That the Hebrew word *sheol* (on the true notion of which the sense of the word hell (or *hades*) in this place is conceived to depend) doth seem originally, most properly, and most frequently (perhaps constantly, except when it is translated, as all words sometimes are, to a figurative use) to design the whole region protended downward from the surface of the earth to a depth (according to the vulgar opinion, as it seems anciently over the world) indefinite and unconceivable; vastly capacious in extension, very darksome, desolate, and dungeon-like in quality,* (whence it is also frequently styled the pit, the lowest pit, the abyss, the depths of the earth, the darkness, the depths of hell.) I need not labor much to confirm the truth of this notion, since it is obvious that this *sheol* (when most absolutely and properly taken, the circumstances of discourse about it implying so much) is commonly opposed to heaven, not only in situation, but in dimension and distance; as when Job, speaking of the unsearchableness of the divine perfections, saith, 'It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?' and the prophet Amos; 'Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb into heaven, thence will I bring them down.'

* Nobis inferi—in fosso terræ et in alto vastitas, et in ipsis visceribus ejus abstrusa profunditas.—Tertul. de An. 35.

2. I say farther, because the bodies (or visible remainders) of persons dying do naturally fall down, or are put into the bosom of this pit, which is therefore an universal grave and receptacle of them, therefore to die is frequently termed καταβαίνειν εἰς ἅδου, or κατάγεσθαι εἰς ἅδου, to descend, or to be brought down into this hell; which happening to all men without exception, (for, as the psalmist says, there is no man that shall deliver his soul (or his life, or himself) from the hand of this all-grasping hell,) therefore it is attributed promiscuously to all men, good and bad alike; 'I will go down,' saith good Jacob, 'unto the grave, unto my son mourning, (καταβήσομαι εἰς ἅδου, I will go down to *sheol*, this common grave of mankind,) and so frequently of others. Whence this hell is apt figuratively to be put for, and to signify equivalently with, death itself; and it is once by the LXX. so translated, (and St. Peter seems to use the phrase after them;) for death, I say, or for the law, condition, and state of death: as in that of Hezekiah in the prophet Isaiah;* '*Sheol* cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth:' where οἱ ἐν ἅδου, and οἱ ἀποθανόντες, (as the Greek renders *sheol* and death,) are the same, and opposed to the living, of whom it is said, 'The living, the living he shall praise thee.'

3. I say farther, that this word, according to ancient use, seems not to signify the place, whither men's souls do go, or where they abide; for that,

1. It can hardly be made appear that the ancient Hebrews either had any name appropriated to the place of souls, or did conceive distinctly which way they did go; otherwise than that, as the Preacher speaks, 'they returned unto God who gave them;' and that they did abide in God's hand; especially the souls of the just, according to that in the book of Wisdom; 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.' And for that,

2. It seems they did rather conceive the souls of men, when they died, to go upward than downward; as the Preacher

* 'Death' and 'hades' are frequently joined as synonymous. (Ecclus. xlviii. 5.)

again intimates, when he differenceth the spirit of man dying from the soul of beasts; 'the soul of beasts descending with its body to the earth; the spirit of man ascending unto God,' to be disposed by him according to his pleasure and justice. And by Enoch's being taken to God, (whose special residence is expressed to be in heaven above,) and by Elias's translation up into heaven, (as it is in the text of the history,) it is probable they did rather suppose the souls of the righteous to ascend, than to be conveyed downward into subterraneous caverns, those μυκοὶ ἅδου, 'closets of hell,' as the book of Wisdom calls them; that βόθρος ἅδου, 'deep pit of hell,' as it is in Ben-Sirach; to ascend, I say, whether into the supreme heaven or no, is not material; but somewhither above, nearer unto God's most special residence, into a happy place.

3. I add that if those ancients had by *sheol* meant the receptacle or mansion of souls, it is not likely they would have used such expressions as those: 'The grave (*sheol*) cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth;' so Hezekiah spake: 'In death there is no remembrance of thee; in *sheol* who shall give thee thanks?' so David said: and, 'There is no works, nor device, nor knowlege, nor wisdom in *sheol*, whither thou goest;' so the Preacher; who hardly it seems could say so, if by *sheol* he meant the place of souls; except he should also mean that souls after death became deprived of all life and sense. The son of Sirach likewise speaks in the same manner: ὑψίστῳ τις αἰνέσει ἐν ἅδου; 'Who shall praise the Most High in hell, instead of them which live and give thanks? Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not: the living and sound in heart shall praise the Lord.'

I must confess that afterwards (even before our Saviour's time) the word ἅδης was assumed by the Jews, to design (as it did among the Greeks) either the place of souls in common, or more strictly the place of souls condemned to punishment and pain, for their bad lives here: Josephus doth often use the word in the first of these senses; and in the New Testament it seems peculiarly applied to the latter; as in the parable of the rich man, who being ἐν τῷ ἅδῃ, 'in hell and torments,' did thence 'lift up his eyes, and behold afar off Lazarus in Abra-

ham's bosom :' but we cannot hence infer the same concerning the ancient meaning of the word *sheol;* especially considering how the Jews, after the prophetical days, in their dispersions becoming acquainted with the world, did borrow some notions and expressions from elsewhere; which expressions our Saviour and his Apostles might well retain, when they were suitable and accommodable unto truth.

III. But however it be determined concerning the proper sense in general of this principal word in the proposition, and of the rest depending thereon, as to their signification here; I do thus, as to the present case, and the last main question propounded about the meaning, whereof the words are capable with truth, answer briefly.

1. If we do interpret the descent into hell here affirmed of our Saviour's interment, or being laid in the bosom of that universal grave we before spake of; or if (in a notion little differing from that) we take these words for a phrase (taking its ground thence in the manner fore-mentioned) importing no otherwise than when it was spoken of Jacob and others, that our Saviour did really pass into the state of death; we are sure therein not to err; the proposition so understood being most certainly true: we shall also hereby be able fairly to satisfy the first and best (if not the only) reason of this proposition being commended to our belief. For that place in the Acts which seems to have been the occasion and the main ground of this proposition being asserted in these terms, doth not refuse, but commodiously admits this interpretation: for our Saviour's 'soul not being left in hell, and not seeing corruption,' is plainly by St. Peter himself interpreted of his resurrection; 'David,' saith he, 'foreseeing this, spake of Christ's resurrection:' and, in like manner, by St. Paul, 'As concerning that he raised him from the dead, now no more to see corruption,' he said in this wise—that speech, I say, 'Our Saviour's soul not being left in hell,' and, 'not seeing corruption,' is by the Apostles interpreted to denote our Saviour's resurrection; that is, his being freed from the bands of death, and raised from the grave, before his flesh had underwent corruption; and it is opposed unto David's continuing in death and seeing corruption; his body being corrupted and consumed in the grave;

the Apostles not designing to assert or prove more than our Lord's resurrection: David, argue they, fell on sleep, and hath continued till now in that state; David remained unto this day in the grave, and so his body being reduced to dust saw corruption; ἐτελεύτησε καὶ ἐτάφη, 'he died and was buried,' without any reversion: therefore that speech of his in the Psalm must not fully and ultimately be understood of him, to whom they did not so exactly agree; but of such an one, who did not abide in that deadly sleep; whose flesh, being opportunely raised, did avoid the sight (or undergoing) of corruption. And whereas it is said, τὴν ψυχήν μου, my soul, or my life; nothing can be thence drawn greatly prejudicial to this exposition; for (to omit that bolder exposition of Beza, who sometime did by the soul understand the dead body, translating the words, *Non derelinques cadaver meum in sepulchro*) nothing is more usual than both for the flesh and for the soul (each of them synecdochically) to signify the person, considered as sometime endued with life; 'Every one that sinneth shall be put to death,' and, 'That soul shall be cut off,' are terms equivalent in the law; The soul that eateth, The soul that toucheth, and the like phrases, do often occur; and those expressions, 'To deliver their soul from death;' 'God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave;' 'What man is he that shall not see death, that shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?' do seem parallel to this, 'Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell;' which yet do import no more, than the persons there spoken of respectively to be preserved from death.

Again, taking soul for the living soul, or that faculty by which we live, and hell for the state of death, the words mentioned, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,' will have this natural exposition, agreeable to the Apostle's design; Thou wilt not suffer me to continue deprived of life, till my flesh be corrupted. It is also observable that St. Paul, in the 13th of the Acts, neglecting the former part, 'Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell,' contents himself with the latter, 'Thou wilt not yield thy Holy One to see corruption;' intimating both parts to signify the same thing.

If it be objected as an inconvenience to this explication of the words here in the Creed, that, admitting it, they signify no

more than what was before expressed in plain words, dead and buried; and so contain only a needless repetition; I answer,

1. That this objection concerns them who inserted the words here; who yet, even supposing this exposition to be good, might be excusable, as suspecting it possible that our Saviour's being ἐν ᾅδου, according to St. Peter, might imply more than this, although they knew not what distinctly; who also might perhaps intend somewhat by these words different from this sense, but not so truly applicable to them, or agreeable to the truth of the thing; I answer,

2. That to say our Saviour did contiuue in the state of death for some time, doth add somewhat above his being dead and buried; wherefore thus understanding the descent doth not render it altogether superfluous.

3. That a greater inconvenience seems to arise from expounding them oth rwise; the doing so reflecting on the more ancient compilers both of this and other breviaries of faith, as the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Councils, Irenæus, Tertullian, &c. who left them out; which they should not have done, if they contain any thing highly material, and different from what is here otherwise expressed; whose credit is (as I conceive) more to be tendered, than of their juniors and followers unknown to us; and so much the more, for that in a matter of this kind, defect or omission is less tolerable than any redundance in expression. Which inconvenience may seem in a manner to reach higher, even to St. Paul himself; who in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, declaring the sum of what he both learned and taught concerning our Saviour's last grand performances, only mentions his death, burial, and resurrection; 'I delivered unto you first, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day;' which enumeration of his, we may, it seems, well acquiesce in, as sufficient and complete, and may thence with great probability infer that no other descent of our Saviour into hell, beside his death and burial, was by him understood, or delivered in his catechetical discourses and preachings as a point of faith; so that what is objected as an inconvenience, proves no small advan-

tage to this exposition. But I say farther, to the main question, that,

2. Interpreting hell for the mansion, or habitation of souls departed hence, (to omit, that *sheol*, as I before noted, seems to signify otherwise in the Old Testament, and consequently thence the place in the Acts applied out of the Psalms would not be proper to this purpose; whereby the main ground and support of the assertion itself, taken according to this sense, were removed; waiving, I say, that consideration, and taking ἅδης, according to the meaning which we must confess it sometime to bear in the New Testament, yet,) there seems to follow some inconvenience thereon. For then we must either take it for the place of damned spirits, shut up in torment or despair, (according to which acception the proposition itself would be most certainly uncertain, having no solid ground for it; and most probably false, for that it is affirmed our Saviour's soul, the same day he died, did go into paradise; 'This day,' said he to the penitent thief, 'shalt thou be with me in paradise,') or we must take it for a place common to all souls, as well good and blessed, as bad and miserable; (for that it in the New Testament at least comprehends the place of torment, is evident by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.) But I think that St. Austin had reason to doubt whether it were consonant to the style of the New Testament, that *hades*, relating to the state of souls, should there be ever taken in a good or middle sense, at least, whereas it is said in the Revelation, that those two inseparable companions, death and *hades*, (that *hades*, which is said to render up its dead to judgment,) 'were cast into the lake of fire,' it is hard to suppose that paradise was cast in there; yea hard it were to say that *hades* was cast in thither, supposing that word did then in its usual latitude of signification (as Christians understood it) comprehend paradise. Yea farther, this explication forces us on this inconvenience, that we must suppose paradise to be seated in a place beneath us, or within the earth; that paradise, which is either the same with the third (or highest) heavens in St. Paul, or confining thereto; it is, I say, hard to be forced by an interpretation of these words, to consent that paradise (that *locus divinæ amœnitatis recipiendis sanctorum spiritibus destinatus;* the place of

divine comfort and amenity, destined to receive the spirits of the saints) should have its place in the darksome bowels of the earth; no commodious situation, it seems, for a garden, for delightsome walks and bowers: yet so it must be seated, that our Saviour's soul may (at least in rigor and propriety of speech) be said to descend thereinto. The word descend, taking hell for the ancient *sheol*, is proper enough, and hath ground both in authentic use and the nature of the thing; but taking hell in this sense, (for the place of souls,) it is most probably improper, and hath no certain ground or authority to commend it; for it is said that our Saviour's soul was in hell, not that it descended thither; nor can it by consequence be inferred so to have done, according to this meaning of hell. However,

3. I add, that seeing it is a most certain truth that our Saviour's soul did immediately go into the place appointed to receive happy souls after their recession from the body, and resignation into God's hands; if we take hell in a general and common sense for the place, or the state of souls departed; and descending for passing thereinto, (by a falling, as it were, from life, or by going away together with the descent of the body; and thence styled descending; what appeareth visibly happening to the body being accommodated to the soul;) if, I say, we do thus interpret our Saviour's descent into hell, for his soul's going into the common receptacle and mansion of souls, we shall so doing be sure not substantially to mistake. And this sense, I conceive, if the words can handsomely bear it, would be very proper to this place, as signifying somewhat distinct from what is otherwise expressed, and serving to the farther establishment of those great articles adjoining, our Lord's death and resurrection; it implying the perfect accomplishment of death, for the soul to have deserted the body, and to have been translated into that ἀδύνατον ἅδην, (as the book of Wisdom calls it,) that invisible region, so far distant hence, whence—*revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras*, is a labor indeed, and a work not to be effected, but by the power of him whose prerogative it is, 'to kill, and make alive;' 'to bring down to hell, and to bring up;' 'to lead unto the gates of hell, and to bring back again.'

This is all that I shall say about this intricate point; for I

cannot well be at the pain to consider or examine those conceits, which pretend to acquaint us why and to what effect our Saviour descended into hell.

That our Lord went thither to preach unto, convert, and redeem from thence all, or some of the damned souls; (for some say that he depopulated and emptied that region of darkness; others are not so liberal as to free all thence, but only the fitter objects of compassion and favor; both saying that which hath very weak or no reasons to maintain, very strong and plain objections to assail it.)

That he went to rescue and conduct into glory the souls of the patriarchs, and other good persons, from that infernal *limbus*, in which till then they were detained, (a place by no likely means to be proved existent otherwhere than in the fancy of its inventors;) or, that he went to deliver the souls of the just, and prophets, from the wicked powers, into whose power they had fallen, (as Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Tryphon, p. 105.)

That he went to affront, triumph over, and terrify the powers of darkness on their own ground, or in their own dominions.

These and the like conceits seem enough discountenanced by saying the Scriptures nowhere plainly declare any such thing, and that therefore they have no good ground to stand on, (they pretend only one or two difficult and obscure places in the first Epistle of St. Peter, which are capable of fair expositions not favorable to them;) whereas in teaching us that our Lord preached on earth salvation to them, who in this life should be converted to believe on him and obey his laws; damnation irrecoverable to them who should persist in infidelity and disobedience: that he merited by his obedience, and purchased by his blood, both a redemption from all future distress and a translation into bliss; that he by his death vanquished all the powers of hell, and triumphed over them on the cross; in these things the Scripture is very clear and copious: but concerning that redemption of souls beneath, that translation of souls out of subterraneous closets or prisons, (as they call them,) that local triumph in the devil's kingdom, it is quite silent, or very dark in expression about them; whence we may well be somewhat backward in yielding assent to such devices, of which, if any

perhaps should be true, yet could not the belief thereof be of necessity, or great importance to us: for what our Saviour so did below would not belong to the salvation of the living, which is abundantly provided for by his death and resurrection, with what followed them, nor would it much refer to our practice, which is otherwise sufficiently directed and encouraged. So that we may however safely be ignorant in regard to any of those notions. But let it suffice to have discoursed thus far about this endless question; except we will end it with that saying of St. Austin; *Melius est dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis:* or with that more peremptory saying of Calvin; *Atqui stultum et temerarium est de rebus incognitis altius inquirere, quam Deus nobis scire permittit.*

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXIX.

ACTS, CHAP. I.—VERSE 3.

REASONS given why Almighty God performed this great work of raising Jesus from the dead. As for the fact itself, or the notion of a resurrection in general, admitting the power and providence of God, there can be nothing in it repugnant to reason, or incredible.

1. To raise a dead man to life is indeed a work surpassing the power of any creature, unassisted by God; but no reason can be assigned why it should be beyond the divine power; since the doing it involves no contradiction; and he that first inspired the soul into the body, may surely be supposed capable of reuniting them. This topic enlarged on.

2. Nor was it apparently in its design unworthy of God, or inconsistent with his holy will: for the ends thereof, such as were pretended by its attesters, were at once important, good, and reasonable. This dilated on.

3. But neither (which is the most considerable point) is the testimony asserting this fact anywise defective or insufficient: consideration of the witnesses to it.

1. As to their number, it was not one or two, but many who conspired in asserting it. 2. They were no strangers to Jesus, but persons by long conversation familiarly acquainted with him. 3. They did aver themselves to be eye or ear-witnesses of the matter, as fully informed about it as senses could make them. 4. The chief of these witnesses, the Apostles themselves, were at first so far from being credulous in this matter, that they took it for a fiction, gave no credence thereto, and

were at last with difficulty persuaded of it. 5. On these grounds they boldly and concurrently aver the fact: *they spake the word of God with boldness; and with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.* Which things being weighed, it will appear impossible that the attesters of this fact, supposing them in their wits and senses, could be ignorant therein, or mistaken about it. Various observations on this point.

It must therefore only be their seriousness, honesty, or fidelity that remains questionable. Their characters in this respect are next considered.

1. They were persons who did (with denunciation of God's heavy judgments on the contrary practice) preach and press earnestly all kinds of goodness, sincerity, modesty, and equity, as main points of that religion which by this testimony they confirmed. This fully shown.

2. Their practice was answerable to their doctrine, being exemplary in all sorts of virtue and sincerity, whereby they did in effect conciliate much respect and authority to their words: the life they led was not the life of wicked impostors, but worthy of the divinest men; fit to carry on the best design.

3. Farther, they were persons of good sense; very wise and prudent; not in the way of worldly or fleshly wisdom, to compass projects of gain or pleasure to themselves; but endued with á wisdom far more excellent, and suitable to the characters they sustained. This enlarged on.

4. As to their purposes in this case: profit, honor, pleasure, or any worldly advantage they could not have in view; for they willingly abandoned all those things, for the sake of this very testimony incurring loss, disgrace, and pain.

5. And all such afflictions, as they knowingly exposed themselves to them, they did endure witth contentedness and joy.

6. Whence it is evident enough that the satisfaction of

their conscience, and expectation of future reward from God for the discharge of their duty, was all the argument that induced them to undertake this attestation, all the reason that could support them in it; neither of which could be consistent with the resolved maintenance of a falsehood: this enlarged on.

7. And how is it conceivable that such persons should be bewitched with so passionate an affection and respect toward a poor dead man, who died miserably and infamously as a malefactor, that merely for his sake, or rather a vain opinion about him, they should with such obstinacy defy all the world, with its persecutions, and the punishments of hell itself.

8. Again, we may consider these witnesses to have been persons very unlikely to devise such a plot, very unfit to undertake it, very unable to manage and carry it through: this shown.

9. And how indeed could such a cheat, if contrived, have so easily prospered, and obtained so wonderful a progress? &c.

10. The matter of their testimony, and its drift, were very implausible, such as no impostors would be likely to forge, and no hearers, without great evidence of truth, be ready to admit. This fully shown.

11. One would indeed think that this report, had it been false, might easily have been disproved and quashed; they who were mightily concerned, and as eagerly disposed to confute it, wanting no means of doing it, &c.

12. As also this testimony had no human power to sustain it, so it used no sleight to convey itself into the persuasions of men: it craved no blind faith: it dared all adversaries and powers to withstand it, relying on the patronage of heaven alone to maintain it.

13. Farthermore, the thing itself, had it been counterfeit, was adapted to fall of itself; the witnesses clashing together, or relenting for their crime. The advice of Gamaliel on this point had much reason in it.

14. He then who doubts the sincerity of this testimony, or rejects it as incredible, must instead of it admit stronger incredibilities: these fully shown.

15. To these things we may add that God himself did signally countenance and ratify this testimouy, by extraordinary powers and graces conferred on the avowers thereof, as well as by a wonderful success bestowed on them.

16. All these things considered, it is sufficiently apparent that this testimony is above all conception: compared with other matters of fact. Conclusion.

He rose again from the Dead.

SERMON XXIX.

ACTS, CHAP. I.—VERSE 3.

To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

THE most proper and most usual way of God, in confirming any truth of high moment in special manner revealed by him, is by lending unto them whom he employs as messengers thereof his powerful arm, for the performance of works supernatural or miraculous. Of such works there is none more certainly such, than raising a dead person to life; the doing which on several accounts plainly surpasseth the power of any creature; not only as exceeding the ordinary law and course of nature established and upheld by God, but for that the souls of men departing hence do return into God's hand, or into a state by high sentence determined, whence no creature is able to fetch them down, or raise them up; because also God hath reserved the prerogative of doing this unto himself; he 'holding' (as it is expressed in the Revelation) 'the keys of hell and of death;' he having said, 'I am he, and there is no God beside me; I kill, and I make alive.'

There could also particularly be no more proper way of confirming our religion to come from God, whether we consider the persons whom it was designed for, or the doctrines it propounded. The Jews were uncapable of conviction by any other way than by miracle; no other reason would have been apprehended by them, or would have had any force on them: 'the Jews,' saith St. Paul, 'require a sign;' and, 'Except

ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,' said our Saviour to them. The Gentiles also had been so used to the winding off and on the subtilties and the plausibilities of disputation, that nothing probably in that kind would have sufficed to persuade them; and therefore somewhat miraculous in the highest kind might be needful to convert them: also the most peculiar and eminent doctrines of our religion (such as are, Our Lord Jesus being the Messias, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world; the future resurrection, general judgment, and dispensation of rewards, answerable to men's practice in this life) cannot more immediately and directly be assured, than by the resurrection from the dead of him who principally did reveal them.

Wherefore Almighty God in confirmation of our religion did perform this great work in raising Jesus our Lord from the dead; and withal (for the conviction of the world, for rendering our faith reasonable and our infidelity inexcusable) he did take especial care that the fact should by very sufficient testimony be conveyed unto us; to which purpose he did, as St. Peter saith, προχειροτονεῖν, predesign, pick out, and appoint a competent number of persons, in all respects capable and fit to assert it: thus is that which St. Luke in our text doth in way of historical narration affirm. And because the truth thereof is in its kind the principal argument, whereby the truth of our religion in gross may be evinced, we shall for the confirmation of our faith against all impressions of this incredulous (and therefore impious) age, endeavor by God's assistance now to declare and maintain it. That Jesus truly died, all the world could testify; no death was ever more solemn or remarkable; nor do any adversaries contest it; that he after that death was by divine power raised again to life is that which we believe and assert. Now whoever with reason shall doubt thereof or deny it, must do it, either because of some repugnance in the fact itself, implying that it could not well be done; or from deficiency of the testimony proving it, as to its authors or circumstances: but neither of these exceptions may reasonably be admitted.

As for the fact itself, or the notion of a resurrection in general, there cannot, (admitting that, which, as capable of antece-

daneous proof, and as acknowleged by all persons owning any religion, may be presupposed, the power and providence of God, together with his chief attributes of wisdom and goodness incomprehensible,) there cannot be any repugnance therein, or any incredibility. For it was neither in its nature impossible to God, or in its design unworthy of him; it contained nothing apparently either beyond the power of God, or presumeable to be against his will.

1. To raise a dead man to life is indeed, we confess and avow, a work surpassing the power of any creature not assisted by God; but no reason can be assigned why it should go beyond the divine power. The doing it doth not involve contradiction, and is therefore an object of power, and at least is achievable by Omnipotence: let the soul be what it will, and in whatever life may be supposed to consist, nothing can hinder that God may reduce the parts of a man into the same state they sometime before were in. And very easily it is conceivable that he who (according to the general notions and current traditions of mankind) did first inspire the soul of man into his body, may reinfuse it being separated; that he who after death keepeth it in his hand, may thence restore it; who also (according to histories received in all the principal religions that have been in the world) hath often actually performed it. Pliny indeed doth reckon this among instances of things absolutely impossible; 'It is,' saith he, 'a great solace of our imperfect nature, that even God cannot do all things; for neither can he bring death on himself, if he would, nor bestow eternity on mortals, nor recal the dead to life:'* but it is no wonder that he, who thought the soul quite to perish by death, should conceive the restitution thereof impossible; although even supposing that, his opinion was not reasonable; for even any thing, how corruptible soever by dissolution of its ingredients, or alteration of its temperament, may, by recollecting and rejoining those ingredients, or by re-establishing the causes of such a temperament, be restored (as a house whose materials are dispersed may be re-edified, or as a liquor by a new fermentation may be revived;) which to effect may not be

* Plin. ii. 7.

deemed hard to him that made the whole world: however to such as him we may say, as our Saviour did to the Sadducees, 'Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' Especially to those who acknowlege the immortality of the soul, or its permanence in a separate state, and who admit the truth of the ancient histories among the Jews, it is not only most evidently possible, but very credible, that God on any considerable occasion should perform it: with such St. Paul might well thus expostulate; 'What? doth it seem incredible to you, that God should raise the dead?' to you that have such previous notions and persuasions about God's omnipotency; (such as the prophet Jeremiah expresseth when he saith, 'Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:') to you who avow God to be the Father of spirits, who 'formeth the spirit of man within him,' and that when man dieth, 'his spirit returneth to God who gave it:' to you who believe that our souls are spiritual substances, like unto angels, subsisting after death, and destined to future rewards: to you, in fine, who may in your holy records find so many experiments of this power exerted by God in his Prophets; such as that of Elias's restoring the widow of Sarepta's son; of Elisha raising the son of the Shunamite; that of the dead man reviving when his body touched the prophet's bones: to you therefore this fact cannot be in itself incredible; nor indeed can it, for the reason suggested, to any man reasonably seem impossible.

2. Nor was it apparently in its design unworthy of God, or inconsistent with his holy will: for the ends thereof (such as were pretended by the attesters of it) were, as very great and important, so most good and reasonable; it aimed at no slight or trifling matter, but such as in appearance highly concerned the glory of God, and conduced to the welfare of mankind; it professing itself to be a credential of the greatest embassy that ever came down from heaven to men, importing the complete revelation of God's will and procurement of salvation to the world; and did therefore in that respect well become the wisdom and goodness of God to use it. It pretended to confirm a doctrine containing most true and worthy

representations of God, the best that could be; declaring most gracious intentions in God of mercy and kindness toward men; no less proper for him than grateful and needful for us; prescribing most excellent rules and patterns of life, (wherein the most genuine piety and virtue, most exact justice and hearty charity, most strict purity and sobriety are prescribed,) yielding the most effectual helps to the practice of all goodness, and tendering the best encouragement thereto; and on this account therefore also most worthy of God. So that indeed God could not be conceived to perform such a miracle to better purpose, than for promoting the designs it pretendeth, being so very great, and so very good: it could not be improper for the divine power to be thus exerted in favor of a religion so apt to promote his glory, and to procure our benefit.

If it be said that it is absurd or improbable that God should choose to perform this miracle on a person of this sort; one so mean and obscure in the state of his life, so wretched and infamous for the manner of his death; that God rather should have chosen for the interpreter of his mind, and minister of his purposes, a personage more illustrious in rank, and clear in repute; I answer, first, that our shallow fancy is a bad and incompetent judge of what is reasonable or absurd, convenient or unfit, in such cases, touching the counsels of God; 'who seeth not as man seeth;' 'whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor ways as our ways;' whose folly 'is wiser than men,' (that is, whose counsels, however seeming strange to our dim apprehensions, do yet far excel the results of our best wisdom;) before whom, 'whatever is high among men is abominable;' 'with whom the wisdom of this world is folly;' whose 'judgments are unsearchable, and his ways are past finding out;' as the holy Scriptures teach us; and as good reason, considering the vast distance between God and us, must acknowlege: so that no such appearance of incongruity can bottom a good exception against this, or any such matter, otherwise well attested. I say farther, that God's choice herein, being weighed by a pure and well disposed mind, will appear on many accounts full of admirable reason and wisdom; all the divine economy concerning our Lord, being rightly apprehended, will soon appear 'wisdom to the perfect,' and will 'be

justified by the children of wisdom;' as that wherein God's transcendent goodness, and perfect justice, and glorious power are with greatest advantage displayed; whereby the hearts of men are most sweetly comforted under their sense of sin and fear of misery, their minds are most clearly instructed in the ways of duty and happiness, their affections are most strongly excited and encouraged to the practice of all goodness: to such purposes (for causes which, were it now seasonable, we could produce) our Saviour's low condition and hard circumstances did admirably serve; and therefore on that score it could not be unlikely that God should raise him from the dead.

3. But neither (which is the most considerable point) is the testimony asserting this fact anywise defective or insufficient, but hath all the conditions imaginably requisite to the most intire assurance of any such matter. The defect in the testimony, if any be, must arise from weakness or from wilfulness in the witnesses, (their want of knowlege, or mistake, their want of honesty or their unfaithfulness,) or from some circumstances belonging to their persons, or their testimony, able to invalidate their attestation; but none of these things can with reason be supposed; they were in all respects more than competently qualified to attest, and all considerable circumstances do assist in confirming their attestation; as by weighing the considerations following may appear.

1. As for their number, it was not one or two persons, (although one or two ordinarily do suffice for decision of the greatest cases among men,) but many who conspired in asserting it. 'He was' (saith St. Paul, one who was conversant with these witnesses, who, of a zealous adversary and fierce persecutor of this testimony, did become an earnest avoucher thereof) 'seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present.' And, 'This Jesus,' say the twelve Apostles, 'hath God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses:' twelve there were who principally were designed and did take it for their especial duty to attest this matter, beside many others, who in their order were able and ready to do it.

2. These witnesses were no strangers to Jesus, but persons

by long conversation most familiarly acquainted with him; 'who had (as it is said, and as it was notorious) been with him from the beginning, who went out and in with him all the time (that is, for three years' space) from his baptism to his ascension.'

3. They did aver themselves to be αὐτόπται τοῦ λόγου, or αὐτηκόοις, eye or ear-witnesses of the matter, as fully informed about it as senses could make them; 'We cannot but speak what we have heard and seen:' 'What we did see with our eyes, and what our hands did handle of the word of life, that we report unto you;' so St. John (the beloved disciple, who constantly attended on his dear Master) expresseth his testimony: and, 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty;' so St. Peter affirmeth concerning the manner of their testifying these matters. They did, I say, hear and see him, and that with all advantage possible or needful, not once or twice, not in passing, or at distance, not in way of glimpse or rumor; but often, for a good time, thoroughly; many days conversing and interchanging discourses with him; 'who,' as St. Peter in the name of the rest saith, 'did eat and drink with him after that he rose from the dead:' and, 'To whom,' as St. Luke, their companion, from their mouth in our text saith, 'also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:' and, 'He was,' saith St. Paul, another familiar of theirs, 'seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses to the people.' And two of these witnesses, St. John and St. Matthew, are in writings extant relaters of passages occurring in their conversation with him, very many, very sensible as can be.

4. We may also consider that the chief of these witnesses, the Apostles themselves, were at first (as St. Luke of them and from them confesseth) so far from being easy or credulous in regard to this matter, that, hearing it from others, who before had seen our Lord risen, they took it for a trifle, or a fiction, and gave no credence thereto: 'their words,'

saith the text, ἐφάνησαν ὡσεὶ λῆρος, 'did seem to them (a toy, or) an idle tale, and they believed them not.' Yea, some of them would hardly confide in their own eyes, nor would yield assent unto the fact appearing to them, until, by letting them touch him, and showing them the marks of his crucifixion remaining on his body, he demonstrated himself to be the very same person who had lived with them and died before them; 'They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit—and while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered,' &c. are words in the history.

5. On these grounds, as they professed, they did, without any mincing, hesitancy, or reservation, in the most full, clear, downright, and peremptory manner, with firm confidence and alacrity, concurrently aver the fact; 'They spake the word of God with boldness—and with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.'

Which things being weighed, it will appear impossible that the attesters of this fact (supposing them in their wits and senses; and certainly they were so, as presently we shall show, and as the thing itself plainly speaks) could be ignorant therein, or mistaken about it. For if all the senses of so many persons in a matter so grossly sensible, so often, and for such a continuance of time, can be distrusted; if the Apostles could imagine they saw their friend and Master, whom they so long had waited on, when they did not see him; that they heard him making long discourses with them, when they did not hear him; that they did walk, eat, and drink with him, did touch and feel him, when there was really no such thing; what assurance can we have of any thing most sensible? what testimony can be of any validity or use? On that hand, therefore, the testimony is impregnable, the witnesses cannot be accounted ignorant or mistaken in the case; for number or for ability, they cannot be excepted against.

It must be therefore only their seriousness, honesty, or fidelity, that remains questionable in them; they must be said to have wilfully deceived and imposed on the world; self-condemned hypocrites, impudent liars, and egregious impostors they must have been, if their testimony was false: but that they were not such persons, that they could not, and would not do

so, there are inducements to believe, as forcible as can be required or well imagined in any such case.

1. They were persons who did (with denunciation of most heavy judgments from God on the contrary practices) preach and press constantly and earnestly all kinds of goodness, veracity, and sincerity, together with humility, modesty, ingenuity, and equity, as main points of that religion which they by this testimony confirmed. All their discourses plainly breathed a most serious and sprightly goodness and charity toward men, very inconsistent with a base plot to delude them; their doctrine utterly condemned all malice, all falsehood, craft, and hypocrisy, detruding into the bottomless pit all 'that love or make a lie.' Consider these sayings and rules of theirs: 'As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men: 'Let your moderation (or equity) be known to all men:' 'Show all meekness to all men:' 'Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:' 'Putting aside all lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor:' 'Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds:' 'Brethren, be not children in understanding:' 'however in malice be ye children, but in understanding be perfect men.' Such were their precepts, discountenancing all malice and all fraud; propounded in a manner as serious and grave and simple as can be imagined; all the tenor of their doctrine consenting to them: wherein also they earnestly declare against and prohibit all vanity of mind and perverseness of humor: all affectations of novelty and singularity; all peevish factiousness and turbulency: all fond credulity, stupidity, and precipitancy; all instability and giddiness of mind; all such qualities which dispose men without most sure and evident grounds either to introduce or to embrace any new conceits, practices, or stories: such was their discourse, nowise sounding like the language of impostors; deceit could hardly so disguise or so thwart and supplant itself.

2. Their practice was answerable to their doctrine, exemplary in all sorts of virtue, goodness, and sincerity; such indeed whereby they did in effect conciliate much respect and authothority to their words: 'Ye are witnesses,' (they could, appeal-

ing to the observers of their demeanor, and to the all-knowing God, say,) 'and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:' and, 'We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' Such a lively sense of goodness shining forth in a long course of practice; so to bridle appetites, so to moderate passions, so to eschew all the allurements of pleasure, profit, and honor; to bear adversities so calmly and sweetly; to express so much tender kindness and meekness toward all men; to be continually employed in heavenly discourses and pious works; exhorting men by word, leading them by example, to all sorts of goodness indisputably such: to live thus, long and constantly, doth nowise suit unto persons utterly debauched in mind, and of a profligate conscience; who had devised, and did then earnestly drive on the propagation of a vile cheat. The life, I say, they led was not the life of wicked impostors, but worthy of the divinest men; fit to countenance and carry on the best design, such as they pretended theirs to be.

3. Farther, they were persons of good sense; yea, very wise and prudent; not in way of worldly or fleshly wisdom; in skill to contrive or compass projects of gain, honor, or pleasure to themselves; to the commendation of them and of their testimony, they disclaimed being wise or skilful that way; having no practice therein, nor caring for it; (for they looked not much on things temporal and transitory; they did not mind earthly things; they had not their conversation or interest here, but above, as citizens of another world, deeming themselves as but sojourners and pilgrims here;) but endued they were with a wisdom, as in itself far more excellent, so more suitable to the persons they sustained; with great perspicacy and sound judgment in the matters they discoursed about, and in the affairs they pursued: such their writings, according to acknowlegement of innumerable most wise and learned persons, fraught with admirable wisdom and heavenly philosophy, (rude indeed and simple in expression, but most exact and profound in sense,) do manifest them to have been; such the tenor of their doctrine

evidenced them, shining with that lustre and beauty, compacted with that strength and harmony, that whoever will not confess it to have proceeded from God, must, on consideration, however allow that it could not have been devised by idiots or mean persons, but did come from persons of much subtilty and great reach: they must be no fools who could frame a religion merely by its own plausibility, without any external help, able presently to supplant all the religions in the world; and to stand durably firm on the foundations laid by them. Such also the notable conduct of their great affair, (notwithstanding so mighty disadvantages and difficulties,) together with the prodigious efficacy their endeavors had on men, do evince them to have been: they surely could not be weak men, who in a plain and peaceable way confounded all the wit and policy, all the learning and eloquence, all the force and violence that withstood them. Experience did attest to the truth of what St. Paul saith; 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowlege of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

4. So were they qualified in their minds: it must be farther also considered, as to their purposes in this case, that in falsely venting and urging this testimony, they could not have any design gainful or beneficial to themselves; but must therein to no end be mischievous to themselves and others; abusing others indeed, but far more harming themselves; they must be supposed voluntarily to have embraced all sorts of inconvenience, and designedly to have rendered themselves miserable; courting adversity, choosing naked and barren evil for its own sake: 'For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: neither of men sought we glory.' Profit, honor, or pleasure, (those baits which intice men to do evil, and set them on wicked attempts,) or any worldly advantage thence to accrue to themselves, they could have no design on; for all those things wittingly and willingly they did abandon; for the sake of this very testimony incurring extremities of loss, of disgrace, and of pain. They

did plainly foresee what entertainment their testimony would find, and how in prosecution thereof they should be forced to endure all kinds of indignity, of damage, and of hardship from men; that 'in this world they should have tribulation;' that 'men should deliver them up to be afflicted, and should kill them:' and that they should 'be hated of all nations for his name's sake:' their Master expressly had forewarned them that 'all who would live godlily in Christ Jesus' (that is, all professors of faith in him, especially the teachers thereof) 'must suffer persecution;' and 'must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God:' that 'bonds and imprisonments did abide them in every place;' that 'God had set forth the Apostles as appointed unto death,' and exposed them as spectacles of scorn and obloquy to the world; that they were 'called to suffering,' and 'appointed to this very thing,' as to their office and their portion: these were the rules and measures they went by; these the expectations they had from the world: according unto which it did in effect happen to them; 'Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labor, working with our hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things unto this day.' So doth St. Paul describe the Apostles' condition.

5. All these afflictions, as they knowingly did object themselves to for the sake of this testimony, so they did endure them with contentedness and joy; when they had been beaten, 'they departed, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus; rejoicing that they were made partakers of Christ's sufferings;' deeming it a privilege that 'was given them, not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his name;' thinking themselves 'happy in being reproached for the name of Christ;' 'taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods;' 'counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowlege of Jesus Christ their Lord, for whom they suffered the loss of all things.'

6. Whence it is evident enough that the satisfaction of their conscience, and expectation of future reward from God for the discharge of their duty herein, was all the argument which did

induce them to undertake this attestation, all the reason that could support them in it; neither of which could be consistent with the resolved maintenance of such a falsehood. They could not indeed but grievously be tormented with remorse in their minds, they could not but dread severe vengeance from heaven, had they been conscious to themselves of so villanous a design of mocking God, (whose name and express command they pretended, whose testimony and judgment they appealed to in this affair,) and together of abusing the world with such an imposture. Such must have been their inward sense, and such their expectations, had they proceeded with guilty conscience in this business: but they do seriously profess otherwise, and the condition of things might assure us they were in good earnest; εἰς τοῦτο, 'For this end,' saith St. Paul, 'we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe:' and, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world:' and, 'Knowing the fear of the Lord,' (that is, being sensible of our duty toward God, and fearful of his judgment, if we transgress it,) 'we persuade men; but are made manifest unto God.' So they declare what principle it was that moved them to this practice: and the hope encouraging them in it they often express; 'If,' said they, 'we suffer with Christ, we shall be glorified together with him:' and, 'We always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body:' and, 'It is a faithful saying, if we are dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us:' and, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.' So they profess concerning the grounds and reasons of their maintaining this testimony (and the points connected therewith) with so great present inconvenience to themselves: and the state of things rendereth their profession most credible; for they appear not so blind as

not to see those inconveniences, nor so fond as to like them for themselves, or on no considerable account: they confess that they should be very stupid and senseless people, if they had incurred and underwent all this to no purpose, or without hope of good recompense for it after this life; 'If Christ be not risen,' saith St. Paul, 'then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, that he raised up Christ;—then we have only hope in this life;' and, 'if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.'

7. And how indeed is it conceivable that such persons should be so bewitched with so passionate an affection, or so mighty a respect, toward a poor dead man, (one who was born so obscurely, who lived so poorly, who died so miserably and infamously, as a malefactor; who indeed so died to their knowlege most deservedly, supposing they did know their testimony to be false; one who never was capable to oblige them, or to recompense them for their actings and sufferings in any valuable measure,) that merely for his sake, or rather not for his sake, but only for a smoke of vain opinion about him, (which could nowise profit either him or them,) they should with an inflexible obstinacy defy all the world; expose themselves to all the persecutions of the world, and to all the damnations of hell. St. Paul surely had another opinion of Jesus, when he said, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us: for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Could they, think we, speak thus, who knew Jesus to be a wicked deceiver, worthily hated of God and men? No assuredly; their speech and behavior do palpably show that therefore they did bear so vehement an affection, and so high a respect toward Jesus, because, as with their mouths they openly professed, so they were in their hearts thoroughly persuaded, that he was the Son of God most dear unto him; who died for their sake; who

was to their knowlege raised again; who also, according to his promises, would recompense their faithful adherence to him with eternal joy and bliss.

8. Again, we may consider these witnesses to have of themselves been persons very unlikely to devise such a plot, very unfit to undertake it, very unable to manage and carry it through: persons they were of no reputation for birth, for wealth, for any worldly interest; persons of no education, no improvement, no endowments of mind (natural or artificial) anywise considerable: they were, as to condition and manner of life, fishermen, publicans, and mechanics; as to abilities of mind, they were (as they report themselves) ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται, illiterate and simple: they were also men of no great natural spirit or courage, but rather irresolute and timorous; as their deserting their Master, their renouncing him, their flying and skulking, reported by themselves, declare: the base, or ignoble, the despicable, or abject, the weak, the foolish things of the world, they did style themselves; and in that no adversary will, I suppose, contradict them. And is it possible that a few (in this respect I mean very few) persons thus conditioned and qualified, should have the wit to contrive, or the courage to maintain a forgery of such importance? What hope they could frame to themselves of any success therein, on so extreme disadvantages, is to any man very obvious. No kind of friends in all the world could they imagine ready to back them, or yield them any encouragement; but heaven, hell, and earth, they had reason to expect all to be combined in opposition to them and their design: they had all reason to fear that God himself would cross them and blast their wicked endeavors to propagate the belief of such a lie, which most profanely they dared to father on him, and to vent in his name. They could not hope the father of lies himself, or any powers of darkness, would be favorable or helpful to them; whose interest they so manifestly impugned; that the success of their doctrine, whether true or false, could not but much prejudice their kingdom; as in effect we see that it did in a manner quite subvert it: they were sure among men to encounter the most potent and most earnest adversaries that could be; all the grandees of the world, both political and religious, deeply concerned in

honor and interest to labor with all their power the detection of their cheat, and overthrow of their design: whence it must be a boldness more than human, more than gigantic, that could bear up against all these adversaries, if their testimony was in their conscience false; against all these oppositions and disadvantages, what could these poor men have to confide in, beside the natural prevalence of truth, and divine assistance thereto; being in their hearts assured of the former, and therefore greatly hoping for the latter?

9. And how indeed could such a cheat, contrived and conducted by so, to human esteem, weak and silly a knot of people, so easily prosper, and obtain so wonderful a progress, so as presently to induce very many persons, μυριάδες πεπιστευκότων, ('myriads of believers,' as it is Acts xxi. 20.) many of them considerable, (even πολὺν ὄχλον ἱερέων, 'a great crowd or company of priests,' as it is said in the Acts,) to embrace it, together with all the crosses and damages attending it? so as to escape all inquisition about it, and overbear all persecution against it, being neither convincible by proof, nor controllable by force; but in despite of all assaults holding its ground, and running forward with huge success; according to that in the Acts, 'So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.'

10. The matter of their testimony (if we consider that as we should do) and its drift were very implausible, such as no impostors would be likely to forge, and no hearers, without great evidence of truth, would be ready to admit. It was no fine story apt to please the lusts, to flatter the humors, or to gratify the fancies of men; but rather very distasteful to flesh and blood, (whose inclinations it mainly thwarted,) likely to offend the ears of all men who should hear it; apt to raise fierce anger and indignation in Jews, great contempt and scorn in Gentiles toward it. The Jews, to whom it was first addressed, it did plainly charge with heinous iniquity and impiety in cruelly murdering a Person most innocent, most excellent in virtue and dignity, most dear to God; it withal defeated their longings for a gaudy Messias, who should restore and rear them into a lofty state of temporal prosperity, substituting in the room a spiritual King, with overtures of felicity invisible and future, little suiting their gross conceit and carnal gust of things; it

also imported the abrogation of those ritual laws, and revolution of those special privileges, wherein they did so please and pride themselves; it opened the inclosures of God's favor and grace, making them common to all people; it crossed their secular interests of emolument and honor annexed to the present outward frame of religion, which it dissolved; it menaced severe vengeance and horrible desolation to their nation and city: and was such a report likely to be entertained by them otherwise than with displeasure and detestation? Neither unto the Gentiles was it likely to be acceptable; for it did also subvert all the religion established among them by law and custom, destroying consequently all the interests of those who were concerned in upholding thereof; such as those who made that famous uproar, crying out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians:' it seemed to thwart the common maxims of policy, and dictates of worldly prudence; it could not but appear, to men prepossessed with admiration of secular wealth, power, and glory, a story most ridiculously extravagant, that so pitiful and wretched a person, as Jesus seemed in the eye of the world to have been, should in this miraculous way be declared the Son of God and Lord of all things, author of life and salvation to all men, sovereign object of all worship and obedience: such a story therefore it was not likely that any men in their senses should conspire to forge, should offer to obtrude on the world, so uncapable of it, so averse from embracing it; and being such, it were strange that by a general repulse it should not presently be stifled and quelled.

11. One would indeed think that this report, had it been false, might easily have been disproved and quashed: they who were mightily concerned, and as eagerly disposed to confute it, wanted no means of doing it: they were not surprised in the matter, but were forewarned of it, and did forebode it coming; they were not drowsy or neglectful, but very apprehensive, careful and cautious in preventing it, that it should not be produced, or, being so, that it might be defeated; for to this purpose they caused the sepulchre of our Lord to be sealed up and guarded by soldiers; that being masters of his body, they might by exhibiting it disprove any report that should be made about his resurrection: they had full opportunity of examining the

matter to the bottom; it being fresh, and presently divulged after its being reported done; they having also all the power and authority on their side, in furtherance of the discussion of the business: we may accordingly suppose them very zealous, diligent, and active in thoroughly sifting it, and striving to detect the falsehood therein: they did so certainly; and thereto they added strict prohibitions, fierce menaces, and bloody persecutions toward the suppression thereof; yet could they not by all their industry confute it, nor by all their fury quell it: why? because it was not confutable; because truth, prosecuted with vigorous integrity and constancy, or rather supported by divine protection and blessing, is invincible. Put case there were now the like fact by so many people reported done within these two months, wherein the church and state were in like manner exceedingly concerned, and should therefore employ all their power and care to discover the truth, one would think it impossible that, were it an imposture, it should escape detection, and being soon, with the general satisfaction of men, quite blown away and exploded: this is the fate of all falsehood, standing merely on its own legs, and not propped by worldly power; but truth, as in the present case, is able to subsist by its own strength, especially heaven being concerned to aid it.

12. As also this testimony had no power to sustain it, so it used no sleight to convey itself into the persuasions of men; it did not creep in dark corners, it did not grow by clandestine whispers; it craved no blind faith of men: but with a barefaced confidence it openly proclaimed itself, appealing to the common sense of men, and provoking the world to examine it; daring all adversaries here to confront it, defying all the powers beneath to withstand it; claiming only the patronage of heaven to maintain it.

13. Farthermore, the thing itself, had it been counterfeit, was in all probability apt to fall of itself; the witnesses clashing together, or relenting for their crime. That advice of Gamaliel had much reason in it; 'Refrain,' said he, 'from those men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought;' καταλυθήσεται, it will of itself be dissolved or destroyed: for how indeed could it be that

among so many confederates in a juggle, not one, either checked by conscience, or daunted by hazards, or wearied and worn out by sufferings, should flinch and fall off, so as to detect the plot, disavow his fault, and retire from persecution, but that each one should persist steadfast in so high a strain of vile dissimulation? If one had fallen off, he had certainly spoiled all the plot, opened all men's eyes, and prevented the faith of any one person to the story: and what cement could firmly combine such a pack of men to God and to all the world, that they should continue invincibly stiff in their faith to one another, and constantly true to so vain a design, good to no man, worst to themselves? that, I say, twelve such persons, every one for a long time, during their whole life, should persevere immovable in so extravagant a resolution of lying, so as by no regrets or dissatisfactions from within, no threats, no perils, no troubles or pains from without, to be ever driven out of it, but should die with it in their mouths, yea, rejoice and glory in dying for it; should dying carry it into the presence of God, and dare with it to appear at his judgment, is exceedingly strange and incredible: it must therefore surely be truth alone that could set them on this design, and could uphold them steady in it; so unanimous a consent, so clear a confidence, so firm a resolution, so insuperable a constancy and patience, nothing but a sense of truth could inspire men with, nothing but a perfectly good conscience could sustain. Possible it is that in matters of speculation and subtilty men on slender grounds may be peremptorily opinionative, and desperately pertinacious; (this experience showeth:) but in a matter of this nature, (a matter of plain fact and gross sense,) none can well be imagined (none especially so qualified, in such circumstances, to such purposes can be imagined) to be so wretchedly stupid, or desperately obstinate.

14. He then who doubts of the sincerity of these witnesses, or rejects their testimony as incredible, must instead of it admit of divers stranger incredibilities; refusing his faith to one fact, devious from the natural course of things, but very feasible to God; he must thence allow it to many others, repugnant to the nature of man, and to the course of human things; performed without God, yea against him. Is it credible that persons

otherwise through all their lives strictly blameless and rigidly virtuous, (even in the more heavenly parts of goodness, in humanity, meekness, peaceableness, humility, and patience,) should, against clearest dictates of conscience, peremptorily and perseveringly commit so palpable villany, as to broach and propagate such an imposture; that they, all whose demeanors and discourses evidently did tend to the advancement of God's glory, and promoting goodness, should so in their hearts utterly defy God and detest goodness; or that persons in a strain incomparably solemn and serious should so plainly teach, so strongly press, so otherwise uniformly practise highest good-will and beneficence toward all men, while they were with all their mind and might striving to gull and abuse men? Is it conceivable that men, otherwise in all their actions so wise and well advised, (able to manage and to perform so great matters,) should so zealously drive on a most vain and senseless project, with more unwearied industry laboring to maintain and disperse a lie, than any men beside did ever strive in behalf of truth? Is it not marvellous that men in all respects so impotent, without any arms or aids, should adventure on so high an enterprise, should with so happy success achieve it; that naked weakness should boldly assault and thoroughly overpower the greatest might; pure simplicity should contest with and baffle sharpest wit, subtlest policy, and deepest learning; that rude speech (void of strength or ornament) should effectually persuade an uncouth and unpleasant tale, against all the finest and strongest rhetoric in the world? Is it not strange that a crew of vile and base persons should so inseparably be linked together with no other hands than deceit and dishonesty; no truth, no virtue, no common interest helping to combine or contain them together? Is it to be believed that men of sense should gratis, for no considerable end or advantage, voluntarily embrace and patiently endure all that is distasteful to human nature, freely exposing themselves, they knew not why, only for the sake of a story, to the fury of earth and flames of hell; eagerly sacrificing their fortunes, credits, lives, and souls themselves, to the ghost of a forlorn wretch and infamous caitiff? is it not, in fine, prodigious that so implausible a falsehood on all greatest disadvantages should encounter, vanquish, and triumph

over truth? These are incredibilities indeed, able to choke any man's faith: yet he that rejects this testimony must swallow and digest them, together with others like them of as hard concoction.

15. To these things we may add that God himself did signally countenance and ratify this testimony; not only by conferring on the avowers thereof extraordinary graces, (invincible courage, irresistible wisdom, indefatigable industry, inflexible constancy and patience; admirable self-denial, meekness, charity, temperance, and all virtues in an eminent degree,) not only farther by a wonderful success and blessing bestowed on their endeavors; but by enduing them with supernatural gifts, and enabling them to perform miraculous works openly and frequently; 'So that by the hands of the Apostles many wonders and signs were done among the people, the Lord giving testimony unto the word of his grace, and granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands;' so that 'with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them all:' (that is, there was a great appearance of the divine favor toward them, and of the divine operation in and by them.) Yielding which kind of attestation was the ancient and usual method of God in authorising his messengers, and approving the declaration of his mind by them, (the seal, as it were, put to the letters credential from heaven;) nor could God afford more convincing signs than these of his approbation to any person or design: that God did thus *συνεπιμαρτυρεῖν* attest, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh, together with these witnesses, if the apostolical history (bearing in it all the characters of a simple, faithful, and upright narration) did not relate; yet the effect of this testimony, so speedily and easily prevailing every where, would render it highly probable, since in likelihood, no human endeavor, without divine assistance, could accomplish a business so great and difficult: if they did no miracles, *τοῦτο μέγιστον σημεῖον*, this, as St. Chrysostom says, 'was the greatest miracle that could be,' that such a testimony should without any miracle prevail.*

* Chrys. in Act. i. 3. Vid. in 1 Cor. Or. v.

16. Now for conclusion, all these things being considered, it is sufficiently apparent that this testimony is above all exception; that no matter of fact ever had, or well could have in any considerable respect, a more valid and certain proof: the greatest affairs in the world (concerning the rights and reputations, the estates and the lives of men) are decided by testimonies in all regards less weighty; so that to refuse it is in effect to decline all proof by testimony, to renounce all certainty in human affairs, to remove the grounds of proceeding securely in any business, or administration of justice; to impeach all history of fabulousness, to charge all mankind with insufficiency, or extreme infidelity; (for if these persons were not able, or not honest enough, what men can ever be supposed such; who can by greater arguments assure their ability, or their integrity in reporting any thing?) to thrust God himself away from bearing credible attestation in any case; (for in what case did he ever or can he be conceived to yield an attestation more full or plain than he did in this? what farther can he perform needful to convince men endued with any competency of reason and ingenuity, or to distinguish them from men of contrary disposition, unreasonably and unworthily incredulous?) in fine, to distrust this testimony is therefore in effect to embrace the vanity of the most wanton or wicked sceptic.

The use of all is in short this, that we should heartily thank God for so clear and strong an assurance of the truth of our faith; that we therefore firmly embrace it, and steadily persevere therein; that we obey it, and bear fruits worthy thereof in our practice; that so doing we may obtain the blissful rewards which on those terms it propoundeth and promiseth; that we may all so do, God of his mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXX.

LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSE 46.

PRELIMINARY observations. The resurrection of our Lord may appear to have been needful and expedient on several accounts,

1. It was needful to illustrate the veracity, wisdom, and providence of God, by making good what he had signified in the ancient Scriptures about it; &c.

2. It was needful in congruity with other events foretold, in order to the accomplishment of those designs which our Lord was to manage; and with respect to that spiritual kingdom which he was to establish. Had the grave swallowed him up, had God *left his soul in hell,* who would have been persuaded of these great things? &c.

It was requisite in itself, or in respect to the many great ends for which it serves, and the excellent fruits which it is apt to produce: its particular use in strengthening the faith and hopes of the disciples, and enlightening their minds, &c. briefly touched on.

4. A general end of it was the production and corroboration of faith in us, concerning all the doctrines of our religion. But more particularly,

5. From it the dignity of our Lord's person, and his especial dearness to God (to the suppression of all exceptions and surmises against him) did appear: this fully shown.

6. Also by our Lord's resurrection we may be assured concerning the efficacy of his undertakings for us. As God, in the death of our Lord, did manifest his wrath towards us, and exe-

cute his justice on us; so in raising him thence, correspondently God did express himself appeased, and his law to be satisfied; &c. Hence in our baptism, as the death and burial of Christ are symbolically undergone by us, so therein do we symbolically rise with him. It also ministers hope of spiritual aid, for the sanctification of our hearts and lives: this shown.

7. Moreover, by our Lord's resurrection, the verity of his doctrines, and the validity of his promises concerning the future state of men are demonstrated, in a way most cogent and pertinent: any miracle, notoriously true, suffices to confirm any point of good doctrine; but a miracle in kind, or involving the matter contested, has a peculiar efficacy to that purpose: this enlarged on.

8. It was a designed consequence of our Lord's resurrection, that he thereby should acquire a just dominion over us; see Rom. xiv. 9.: by the obedience of his death he earned that dominion; but from his resurrection he began to possess it as a reward; &c. Practical application of this point considered.

1. First then, the consideration of our Lord's resurrection should strengthen our faith, and quicken our hope in God, causing us firmly to believe his word, and to rely on his promises, especially those which concern our future state: this shown.

2. It affords matter of great joy, and an obligation thereto. If the news of our Saviour's first birth were *glad tidings of great joy to all people*, how much more may the news concerning this his second nativity be gladsome! Reasons for this given.

3. Great consolation hence arises, in that by this event our redemption is completed, and we become intirely capable of salvation: a full discharge is thus exhibited from the guilt and punishment of our sins, &c.

4. This consideration should be a forcible engagement on us to obedience and holiness of life; lest we be rebellious towards him who thus gained a dominion over us; undutiful and un-

grateful for his kindness. Christ also in effect is not risen to those who are impenitent, and who continue in their trespasses: for death still retains his power over them.

5. Lastly, the contemplation of this point should elevate our thoughts and affections unto heaven and heavenly things, above the sordid pleasures, the fading glories, and the unstable possessions of this world; for *him we should follow whithersoever he goeth.* Conclusion.

The third day he rose again, &c.

SERMON XXX.

LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSE 46.

And he said unto them, Thus it is written; and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

THE words of men leaving this world (as proceeding from a depth of serious concernedness, and influenced by a special providence) are usually attended with great regard, and a kind of veneration: these are such, even the words of our departing Lord: the which therefore deserve and demand our best consideration.

They respect two points of grand importance, the passion and the resurrection of our Lord; of which I shall only now consider the latter, as being most agreeable to the present season: and whereas there be divers particulars observable in them, I shall confine my discourse to one, being the main point; couched in those words, 'thus it behoved;' which import the needfulness and expediency of our Lord's resurrection: of which I shall endeavor first to declare the truth, then to show the usefulness, by a practical application thereof.

The resurrection of our Lord may appear to have been needful and expedient, on several good accounts.

1. It was needful to illustrate the veracity, wisdom, and providence of God, by making good what he had signified in the ancient Scriptures concerning it; either in mystical adumbrations, or by express predictions; understood according to those infallible expositions, which the Apostles did receive from the instruction of our Lord, or from illumination of that

Spirit which dictated the Scriptures: the particular instances, as being obvious, and requiring large discourse, I now forbear to mention.

2. It was needful in congruity to other events foretold, and in order to the accomplishment of those designs which our Lord was to manage: the whole economy and harmony of the evangelical dispensation, as it is represented by the Prophets, doth require it: it was, according to their predictions, designed that Christ should erect a spiritual kingdom, and administer it for ever, with perfect equity, in great peace and prosperity; that he should in our behalf achieve glorious exploits, subduing all the adversaries of our salvation, (sin, death, and hell;) that he should establish a new covenant, on better promises, of another eternal most happy life, assuring to the embracers thereof an intire reconciliation and acceptance with God; that he should convert the world to faith in God, and observance of his will: in execution of these purposes, it was declared that he should undergo suffering, and be put to death in a most disgraceful and painful manner; it consequently must be supposed that from such a death he should conspicuously and wonderfully be restored to life; how otherwise could it appear that he did reign in glory, that he had obtained those great victories, that he had vanquished death, that the former curses were voided, God appeased, and mankind restored to favor by him? Had the grave swallowed him up, had God 'left his soul in hell,' had he rested under the dominion of common mortality, had after his dismal passion no evidence of special favor toward him shone forth; what ground had there been to believe those great things? who would have been persuaded of them? The Scripture therefore, which 'foretelleth the sufferings of our Lord, and the glories following them;' which saith, that 'having drunk of the brook in the way, he should lift up his head;' that 'when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand;' that 'because he had poured out his soul unto death, God would divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong;' that 'unto him whom man despised, to him whom the nation abhorred, kings should look and arise, princes should worship;'

the Scripture, I say, foretelling these events, doth consequentially imply the needfulness of his resurrection.

3. It was requisite in itself; or in respect to the many great ends for which it serveth, and the excellent fruits which it is apt to produce: as will appear by reflecting on those which are suggested in the New Testament.

I pass by its particular usefulness in regard to our Lord's Apostles and disciples; its serving to reinforce their faith, and rear their hopes, being staggered by his passion; to comfort them in those sorrowful apprehensions and despondencies of heart, which arose from the frightful events befalling him; to enlighten their minds by more perfect instruction, removing their ignorance, and reforming their mistakes concerning him and 'the things of his kingdom;' to furnish them with instructions and orders requisite for managing the employments committed to them; to arm them by consolatory discourses and gracious promises of support against the difficulties, hazards, and troubles they were to encounter, in the profession and propagation of his doctrine; in fine, by all his admirable deportment with them, and his miraculous departure from them, to confirm them in their faith, and encourage them in their duty: these particular uses, I say, we shall pass over, insisting only on those more common ends and effects in which ourselves and all Christians are more immediately concerned.

4. A general end of it was the production and corroboration of faith in us concerning all the doctrines of our religion; for that by it the truth of all our Lord's declarations concerning his own person, his offices, his power, his precepts and his promises, (to the highest pitch of conviction and satisfaction,) was assured; it being hardly possible that any miracle could be greater in itself for confirmation of the whole, or more proper for ascertaining the parts of our religion. But more particularly;

5. First, from it the dignity of our Lord's person and his especial dearness to God (to the voidance of all exceptions and surmises against him) did appear.

If the meanness of his birth and parentage, if the low garb and dim lustre of his life, if the bitter pains and shameful disgraces of his death, (however accompanied with rare qualities

shining in him, and wonderful deeds achieved by him,) in persons standing at distance, casting superficial glances on things, and judging by external appearances, might breed disadvantageous apprehensions or suspicions concerning him, whether he were indeed, as he pretended, the Son of God, designed by him to be the Saviour of mankind, 'the Lord of all things,' the Judge of the world; the wonderful power and signal favor of God demonstrated in his resurrection, served to discuss those mists, and to correct such mistakes, evincing those temporary depressions to have been only dispensations preparatory toward his greater exaltation in dignity and apparent favor with God; 'for though,' saith St. Paul, 'he was crucified out of weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God;' that is, although in his sufferings the infirmity of our nature assumed by him was discovered, yet by his recovering life the divine power attending him was eminently declared; it was indeed an excessive grandeur of power, an energy of the might of strength which God did exert 'in the raising of Christ from the dead,' as the Apostle laboreth to express the unexpressible eminency of this miracle; and being so high an instance of power, it was consequently a special mark of favor; God not being lavish of such miracles, or wont to stretch forth his arm in behalf of any person to whom he doth not bear extraordinary regard: the which consequence also, by reflecting on the circumstances and nature of this event, will farther appear.

He was persecuted and put to death as a notorious malefactor, and an enemy to God, to true religion, to the common peace, to goodness; and his being delivered up to suffer was an enforcement of that pretence; for his adversaries thence did argue that God had disavowed and deserted him; they insulted over him, as one in a forlorn condition, 'esteeming him,' as the Prophets foretold, 'stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:' but God thus, by his own hand, undoing what they had done against him, did plainly confute their reasonings; did evidence their accusations to be false, and their surmises vain; did, in opposition to their suggestions, approve him a friend and favorite of God, a patron of truth, a maintainer of piety and peace; one meriting, because obtaining, the singular countenance and succor of God.

And if yielding our Lord over to death (which being a total incapacity of enjoying any good, doth signify an extremely bad state) might imply God's displeasure or disregard toward him, (as indeed it did in a sort, he standing in our room to undergo the inflictions of divine wrath and justice;) then, answerably, restoring him to life (which, as the foundation of enjoying any good, doth represent the best condition) must demonstrate a singular tenderness of affection, with a full approbation and acceptance of his performances: this indeed far more pregnantly doth argue favor, than that could imply displeasure; for that may happen to the best men on other grounds, this can bear no other than a favorable interpretation.

Farther, to give life doth ground that relation which is deepest in nature, and importeth most affection; whence, in the holy style, to raise up to life, is termed to beget; and the regeneration is put for the resurrection; so that it being a paternal act, signifieth a paternal regard; and thence perhaps St. Paul telleth us that our Lord 'was declared, or defined to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.'

6. Secondly, by our Lord's resurrection we may be assured concerning the efficacy of his undertakings for us: for considering it we may not doubt of God's being reconciled to us, of obtaining the pardon of our sins and acceptance of our persons, of receiving all helps conducible to our sanctification, of attaining final happiness, in case we are not on our parts deficient; all those benefits by our Lord's resurrection, as a certain seal, being ratified to us, and in a manner conferred on us.

As God, in the death of our Lord, did manifest his wrath toward us, and execute his justice on us; so in raising him thence correspondently God did express himself appeased, and his law to be satisfied; as we in his suffering were punished, ('the iniquity of us all being laid on him,') so in his resurrection we were acquitted and restored to grace; as Christ did merit the remission of our sins and the acceptance of our persons by his passion, so God did consign them to us in his resurrection; it being that formal act of grace, whereby, having sustained the brunt of God's displeasure, he was solemnly reinstated in favor, and we representatively, or virtually, in him;

so that (supposing our due qualifications, and the performances requisite on our parts) we thence become completely justified, having not only a just title to what justification doth import, but a real instatement therein, confirmed by the resurrection of our Saviour; whence 'he was,' saith St. Paul, 'delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;' and, 'Who then,' saith the same Apostle, 'shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' 'It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again:' our justification and absolution are, ye see, rather ascribed to the resurrection of Christ than to his death; for that indeed his death was a ground of bestowing them, but his resurrection did accomplish the collation of them; for since, doth the Apostle argue, God hath acknowleged satisfaction done to his justice, by discharging our surety from restraint and from all farther prosecution; since in a manner so notorious God hath declared his favor toward our proxy; what pretence can be alleged against us, what suspicion of displeasure can remain? Had Christ only died, we should not have been condemned, our punishment being already undergone; yet had we not been fully discharged, without that express warrant and acquittance which his rising doth imply: so again may St. Paul be understood to intimate, when he saith, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins:' death (or that obligation to die, to which we did all for our transgressions stand devoted) was condemned, and judicially abolished by his death; but it was executed and expunged in his resurrection; in which trampling thereon he crushed it to nothing: wherefore therein mankind revived, and received 'the gift of immortality;' that being a clear pledge and full security, that 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive:' 'He,' saith St. Chrysostom, 'by his resurrection dissolved the tyranny of death,' and 'with himself raised up the whole world;'* 'By the pledge of his resurrection,' saith St. Ambrose, 'he loosed the bands of hell;'† 'Thereby,' saith St. Leo, 'death received its destruction, and life its beginning.'‡ Therein not only the

* Chrys. Rom. i. 4. tom. v. Or. 84. † Ambr. ad Grat.
‡ Leo M. Ep. 81.

natural body of Christ was raised, but the mystical body also, each member of his Church was restored to life, being thoroughly rescued from the bondage of corruption, and translated into a state of immortality; so that 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

Hence in our baptism, (wherein justification and a title to eternal life are exhibited to us,) as the death and burial of Christ are symbolically undergone by us; so therein also we do interpretatively rise with him; 'Being,' saith St. Paul, 'buried with Christ in baptism, in it we are also raised together with him;' and, 'Baptism,' St. Peter telleth us, being antitype of the passage through the flood, 'doth save us by the resurrection of Christ,' presented therein.

It also ministereth hopes of spiritual aid, sufficient for the sanctification of our hearts and lives; for that he who raised our Lord from a natural death, thence doth appear both able and willing to raise us from a spiritual death, or from that mortal slumber in trespasses and sins in which naturally we do lie buried, to 'walk in that newness of life' to which the gospel calleth us; and in regard to which, 'God,' saith St. Peter, 'having raised his son Jesus, sent him to bless us, in turning every one of us from his iniquities.'

The same consequently is a sure earnest of our salvation: for 'If,' saith St. Paul, 'when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'

7. Thirdly, by our Lord's resurrection, the verity of his doctrines and the validity of his promises concerning the future state of men are demonstrated, in a way most cogent and most pertinent: any miracle, notoriously true, doth indeed suffice to confirm any point of good doctrine; but a miracle in kind, or involving the matter contested, hath a peculiar efficacy to that purpose: so did our Lord's resurrection, in way of palpable instance, with all possible evidence to sense, directly prove the possibility of our resurrection, together with all points of doctrine coherent thereto; (the substantial distinction of our soul from the body, its separate existence after the dissolution, and

consequently its immortal nature, God's wise and just providence over human affairs in this state, the scrutiny and judgment of our actions hereafter, with dispensation of recompenses answerable;) those fundamental ingredients of all religion, most powerful incentives to virtue, and most effectual discouragements from vice; the which, (before much liable to doubt and dispute, little seen in the darkness of natural reason, and greatly clouded in the uncertainty of common tradition,) as our Lord by his doctrine first brought into clear light, so by his resurrection he fully did show that light to be sincere and certain. Infinitely weak and unsatisfactory were all the arguments which the most careful speculation could produce, for asserting those important verities, in comparison to that one sensible experiment attesting to them: for if our Lord, a man as ourselves, did arise from the dead, (his soul, which from the cross descended into the invisible mansions, returning into his body,) then evidently our souls are distinct from our bodies, and capable of subsistence by themselves; then are they apt to exist perpetually; then may they be put to render an account for what is acted here, and accordingly may be dealt with. Hence may we see that St. Paul discoursed reasonably when he told the Athenians, that, 'Now God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν, exhibiting an argument most persuasive to all, having raised him from the dead;' that St. Peter also might well aver that 'God hath regenerated us to a lively hope of an incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven for us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

Particularly the resurrection of our bodies, restoring our perfect manhood to us, (a point wholly new to the world, which no religion had embraced, no reason could descry,) was hereby so exemplified, that considering it, we can hardly be tempted to doubt of what the gospel teacheth about it: that he, preceding as the 'first-born from the dead,' and 'the first-fruits of them which sleep,' as 'our forerunner,' and 'the Captain of life;' we, ἐν ἰδίῳ τάγματι, in our due rank and season, as younger sons of the resurrection, as serving under his command and conduct, in resemblance and conformity to him,

shall follow; so that, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in us, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us;' that, 'If we have been planted with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also grow up in the likeness of his resurrection;' that, 'As we have borne the image of the earthly man, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;' so that God, 'who raised our Lord, shall also raise us by his power;' for we cannot but allow that consequence to be reasonable, which St. Paul doth imply, when he saith, 'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep through Jesus will God bring with him,' reducing them into a state conformable to his, by reunion of their body and soul.

8. Fourthly, it was a designed consequence of our Lord's resurrection, that he thereby should acquire a just dominion over us; for 'to this end,' saith St. Paul, 'Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living:' by the obedience of his death he did earn that dominion, as a worthy recompense thereof; 'He did by his blood purchase us' to be his subjects and servants: but from his resurrection he began to possess that reward, and to enjoy his purchase; it being the first step of his advancement to that royal dignity and preeminence over all flesh; to which, in regard to his sufferings, God did exalt him; concerning which, before his ascension, he said to his disciples, 'All power is given me in heaven and earth:' on so many great accounts was our Lord's resurrection behooveful; so that it is no wonder, if God took such especial care to assure its truth, and recommend its belief to us; appointing so many choice persons by their testimony to assert and inculcate it; to do so being often expressed a main part and peculiar design of the office apostolical. Nor is it strange that to the hearty belief and ingenuous profession of this one article, (it enfolding, or inferring the truth of all other Christian doctrines,) salvation is annexed, according to that assertion of St. Paul; 'The righteousness of faith saith thus, (or this is the purport of the Christian institution,) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God

raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Nor is it much, that a consideration of this point should be so continually present to the minds of the ancient Christians, that whenever they did meet, they should be ready to salute one another with a Χριστὸς ἀνέστη, 'Christ is risen;' it importing so great benefits, and producing so excellent fruits; in regard whereto St. Paul expressed his so ardent desire and high esteem of 'knowing Christ, and the power of his resurrection,' as the most valuable of all knowleges; which having in some measure declared, I come now briefly to apply.

1. First then; the consideration of our Lord's resurrection should strengthen our faith and quicken our hope in God, causing us firmly to believe his word, and confidently to rely on his promises, especially those which concern our future state. God having thereby, as by a most sensible proof, against all objections of our feeble reason, demonstrated himself able, as by a most sure pledge declared himself willing, to bestow on us a happy immortality, in gracious reward of our obedience: for seeing by so illustrious an instance God hath manifested that he is thoroughly reconcilable to sinners, that he bountifully rewardeth obedience, that death and hell are vincible, what reason can we have to distrust his fidelity, to doubt of his power, or to despair of his mercy? Surely, he that was so faithful in raising our Lord from the grave, so notably rewarding his obedience and patience, (in advancing him to supreme dignity and glory at his right hand,) will not fail also to confer on us (walking in the footsteps of his piety) the promised inheritance of everlasting life and bliss, the never-fading crown of righteousness and glory. Surely, by this noble experiment we are clearly informed, and should be fully persuaded, that nothing can destroy us, nothing can harm us, nothing can separate us from our God and our happiness; that no force, no fraud, no spite of men, or rage of hell, can finally prevail against us; what then reasonably can be dreadful or discouraging to us, what should be able to drive us into distrust or despair?

2. This point affordeth matter of great joy, and an obligation thereto. If the news of our Saviour's first birth were (as an angel called them) 'good tidings of great joy to all peo-

ple,' how much more may the news concerning this second nativity of him be hugely gladsome? for in that birth he did but assume our flesh; in this he did advance it: then he began to sustain our infirmities; now he surmounted them: by his incarnation he became 'subject to death;' by his resurrection death was subdued to him: at that he entered into the field, and set on the bloody conflict with our foes; in this he returned a triumphant conqueror, having utterly vanquished and quelled them: the fury of the world, the malice of hell, the tyranny of sin, the empire of death, all of them combined to render us miserable, he did in his resurrection perfectly triumph over: and doth it not then become us to attend his glorious victories with our joyful gratulations? Is it not extremely comfortable to behold our gallant champion, (the only champion of our life and welfare,) after all the cruel blows which the infernal powers laid on him, after all the ghastly wounds which human madness did inflict, after he had passed through the scorching flames of divine wrath and justice, after he had felt the sorest pangs of death, perfectly recovered from all those distresses; standing upright, and trampling on the necks of his proud enemies? Are not most sprightful expressions of gratitude, are not most cheerful acclamations of praise due from us to the invincible 'Captain of our salvation?' Shall we not with great alacrity of mind contemplate the happy success of that mighty enterprise, wherein no less our welfare than his glory was concerned? Is it not a pleasure to consider ourselves so exempted from that fatal doom, to which all human race was sentenced; to see life and immortality so springing forth on us; to view ourselves, the children of dust and corruption, from hence in age and dignity so nigh equalled to the first-born sons of the creation?

It is said of the first disciples that although they saw and felt our Lord risen, yet 'for joy they could not believe it:' so incredibly good was the news to them; excess of love and delight choked, or rather suspended their faith: we cannot be such infidels from surprise; but let us be as faithful in our joy.

3. Great consolation surely it ought to breed in us, to con-

sider that by this event our redemption is completed, and we become intirely capable of salvation; that in it a full discharge is exhibited from the guilt and from the punishment of all our sins, whereof we do truly repent; that God's justice appeareth satisfied, and his anger pacified; that his countenance shineth out clearly with favor and mercy toward us; that our condemnation is reversed, our ransom is accepted, our shackles are loosed, and our prison set open; so that with full liberty, security, and hope, we may walk forward in the paths of righteousness toward our better country, the region of eternal felicity. Farther,

4. This consideration should be a forcible engagement on us to obedience and holy life. Our Lord did by his resurrection gain a dominion over us, unto which if we do not submit, we shall be very injurious and wicked; unto which if we do not correspond by all humble observance, we shall be very ingrateful and undutiful; 'He was raised to bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities;' and no less unhappy than unworthy we shall be, if we defeat that gracious purpose; it is the condition of our obtaining the happy fruits and benefits of his resurrection, that we should ourselves rise with him 'unto righteousness and newness of life;' by not complying therewith, we shall render his resurrection unprofitable to us, becoming unworthy and uncapable of any good advantage thereby. 'Awake,' saith the Apostle, 'thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life;' to awake from our spiritual slumber, to arise from dead works, are the terms on which Christ doth offer that eternal happy life: for as the pains and ignominies of his death will nowise avail those who are not 'conformable to his death,' in 'dying to sin' and 'mortifying their lusts;' so will not they be concerned in the joys and glories of his resurrection, who are not 'planted in the likeness thereof' by renovation of their minds and reformation of their lives; for as 'he died,' so he was also 'raised for us,' that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but unto him who died and rose again for us:' our sins did slay him; it must be our repentance that reviveth him to us, our obedience that maketh him to live in our behalf; for Christ is not in effect risen to im-

penitent people: as they continue dead in trespasses and sins, as they lie buried in corruption of heart and life, so 'their condemnation abideth,' and death retaineth its intire power over them: they shall not καταντᾷν εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν, 'attain unto that happy resurrection,' whereof our Lord's resurrection was the pledge and pattern; so did our Lord assure in his preaching; 'He,' said our Lord, 'that believeth in the Son' (that is, who with a sincere, strong, and lively faith, productive of due obedience, believeth in him) 'hath everlasting life;' but ὁ ἀπειθῶν, 'he that disobeyeth' (or with a practical infidelity disbelieveth) 'the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;' whence we may well infer with St. Paul, 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if through the Spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live;' that is, assuredly by obeying God's will we shall obtain, by disobedience we must forfeit, all the benefits of our Lord's resurrection.

5. Lastly, the contemplation of this point should elevate our thoughts and affections unto heaven and heavenly things, above the sordid pleasures, the fading glories, and the unstable possessions of this world; for 'him we should follow whithersoever he goeth;' rising with him, not only from all sinful desires, but from all inferior concernments, soaring after him in the contemplation of our minds and affections of our heart; that 'although we are absent from the Lord in the body,' we may be 'present with him in spirit,' having our 'conversation in heaven,' and 'our heart there, where our treasure is;' for if our souls do still grovel on the earth, if they be closely affixed to worldly interests, deeply immersed in sensual delights, utterly 'enslaved to corruption,' we do not partake of our Lord's resurrection, being quite severed from his living body, and continuing in vast distance from him: I shall therefore conclude, recommending that admonition of St. Paul; 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;' that 'when Christ,

who is our life, shall appear, then ye may also appear with him in glory.' Amen.

'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXI.

MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 19.

PRELIMINARY observations on the text, &c. The words contain two grand points of our faith, *the ascension of our Lord to heaven*, and his *session there at God's right hand.* These points explained; their truth confirmed; their ends and effects shown; and their practical application pointed out.

I. *He was received into heaven:* this is the first point; wherein we may observe the *act*, and its *term:* the *act; he was taken up*, saith St. Mark; *he was carried up*, and *he was borne up*, says St. Luke; *he went into heaven*, says St. Peter: which phrases signify that he was, according to his humanity, translated by the divine power into heaven: that he went with a proper local motion, the *term* whereof was heaven. And what is meant by heaven may appear from other equivalent places in Scripture: these quoted: whence it appears this *term* was the inmost sanctuary of God's *temple* above, *not made with hands;* even that *inaccessible light, where he dwelleth.* And there *he sitteth at God's right hand;* the meaning of which words it is not difficult to find out: this fully investigated. Our Lord as man, in regard to his perfect obedience, being raised by God to the supreme pitch of favor and honor with him, is so at the right hand of God that all power is given him for the governance and preservation of his church; &c. which state in Scripture is called his glorification.

II. The confirmation of these points may be drawn, partly from *ocular testimony*, partly from *rational deduction*, partly from *their correspondence with ancient presignifications and predictions.*

The ascension of our Lord was testified by the Apostles, who were eye-witnesses thereof.

His arriving at the supreme pitch of glory, and his sitting there, is deduced from the authority of his own word, and of his inspired disciples; and these stand on the same grounds with other points of Christian faith, which need not now be insisted on.

But it may be proper and useful to consider how they were by the Holy Spirit in the ancient prophets presignified and predicted: that they were so, our Lord himself tells us; Luke xxiv. 25. 26. and St. Peter testifies the same: 1 Peter i. 11. The types of Isaac, Joseph, Joshua, David, Enoch, Elijah, considered. That of the high priest and Jewish temple.

These points were also aptly signified. Instances given from the Psalms. In fine, all the many prophecies that concern the spiritual and eternal kingdom of the Messias, do in effect declare the ascension and session of our Lord; particularly those of David, Psalm ii. 6. 8.; and that of Daniel, vii. 13. 14.

III. The ends and effects of these two great points are in Scripture declared to be these.

Our Lord by them was invested with the complete exercise of all his offices and privileges; &c.

1. He ascended into, and resides in heaven, at the right hand of divine majesty and power; that as a king he might govern us, protect us from all danger, relieve us from all want, deliver us from all evil; &c. This enlarged on.

2. That he may, in regard to us, there exercise his priestly function; and that of intercession; whence it is, that in his name, and through him, we are injoined to present our prayers, thanksgivings, and all services. Col. iii. 17.

3. Again, our Lord tells us that it was necessary for him to depart hence and to enter into this glorious state; that he might there exercise his prophetical office, by imparting to us his Holy Spirit for our instruction, direction, and comfort: this topic enlarged on.

4. He also tells us that he went *to prepare a place* for his faithful servants, having entered, *as our forerunner into heaven:* Heb. vi. 20. It was his ascension which did unlock the gates of heaven, before shut on us by our sins; &c. Opinions of the ancient fathers on this point; &c.

5. It was indeed an effect of our Lord's ascension and glorification, that all good Christians are with him, in a sort, translated into heaven, and advanced into a glorious state. We thence become, even as men, greatly dignified; but much more, as Christians, are we elevated by our near relation to him, and our participation with him as our head. We are also advantaged, in that his being so glorified is a sure pledge of that reward which all good Christians shall receive; &c.

6. It might be added that God did thus advance our Saviour, to declare the special regard he bears to piety, righteousness, and obedience. We see him, not only as an object of our contemplation, but as a pattern of our practice, and a ground of our encouragement.

IV. Practical use of considering these important points.

1. It may serve to guard us from many dangerous errors; such as that of the old Eutychians, who held that the human nature of our Lord was converted into his divinity, or swallowed up thereby; that of the German Ubiquitaries, of the Lutheran Consubstantialists, and of the Roman Transubstantiators: these enlarged on.

2. Is Christ ascended and advanced to this glorious eminency? Then let us answerably behave ourselves, rendering him the honor, worship, and service due to that his state.

3. Hence also we have great cause to rejoice that our Lord

hath obtained so absolute and glorious a victory over all our cruel enemies; &c.

4. The consideration of these things may serve to cherish and strengthen all kinds of faith and hope in us.

5. Also to excite and encourage our devotion, as having such a Mediator, so near God's presence, so much in his favor.

6. It may encourage us to all kind of obedience, if we consider his glory as a pledge of like recompense to ourselves, provided we tread in his footsteps. *To him that overcometh*, saith our Lord, *I will grant to sit with me on my throne*; &c.

7. Lastly; the consideration of these points should elevate our thoughts and affections from inferior things here, unto heavenly things; according to that of St. Paul, *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting, at the right hand of God.* Conclusion.

He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God.

SERMON XXXI.

MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 19.

He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

OUR Lord after his resurrection having consummated what was requisite to be done by him on earth, for the confirmation of our faith, and the constitution of his church; having for a competent time conversed with his disciples, enlightening their minds with knowlege of the truths concerning him, and in right understanding of the Scriptures relating to him; establishing their faith in immovable conviction, inflaming their affections by pathetical discourse, comforting their minds with gracious promises against tribulations ensuing, and arming their hearts with courage and patience against all oppositions of earth and hell; directing and prescribing to them how they should proceed in the instruction of men, and conversion of the world to the belief of his doctrine, the acceptance of his overtures, the observance of his laws; furnishing them with authority, and giving them orders to attest the truth concerning him, to dispense the grace and mercy procured by him, and to promulgate the whole will of God to mankind; promising them spiritual gifts and aids (both ordinary and extraordinary) necessary or conducible either to the common edification or to the particular welfare of Christians; ordering them to collect and compact the society of faithful believers in him, which 'he had purchased with his blood;' in fine, imparting to them his effectual benediction, and a promise of continual assistance in the prosecution of those great and holy designs which he com-

mitted to their management; having, I say, accomplished all these things, which St. Mark in this verse expresseth briefly by the words μετὰ τὸ λαλῆσαι αὐτοῖς, 'after he had spoken to them;' and which St. Luke compriseth in the words ἐντειλάμενος αὐτοῖς, that is, having imparted to them all needful instructions, and imposed all fitting commands on them; he in their presence departed away into the possession of his glorious state; 'He was,' saith St. Mark in our text, 'received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.'

Which words of the Evangelist do contain two grand points of our faith, the ascension of our Lord to heaven, and his session there at God's right hand; the right understanding and due consideration whereof [as it is now peculiarly, when the church recommendeth these points to be the subjects of our devotion most seasonable, so perpetually] is of great use for the edification of our souls and the direction of our practice: in order to which purposes, I shall endeavor to explain them, to confirm the truth of them, to show the ends and effects of them, and practically to apply them.

1. 'He was received into heaven;' this is the first point, wherein we may observe the act and its term: the act, ἀνελήφθη, he was assumed, or taken up, saith St. Mark here; ἀνεφέρετο, he was elevated, or carried up; and ἐπήρθη, he was borne up, saith St. Luke; ἐπορεύθη, he went into heaven, saith St. Peter: which phrases do import that he was, according to his humanity, (or that his body and soul united together were,) translated by the divine power into heaven; or that he as God (by the divine power immanent in him) did transfer himself as man thither; so that he both was carried and did go with a proper local motion, the term whereof was heaven.

And what is meant by heaven, in the proper sense adequate to this matter, may appear from other places equivalent, by which this action, or the result thereof are expressed. It is called 'ascending to his Father,' and 'passing out of this world to his Father;' that is, departing hence into the place of God's more especial presence and residence; where 'he,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, 'appeareth to the face of God;' 'being,' as St. Peter speaketh, 'exalted to the right hand of God;' (that is, to the greatest proximity, and therefore highest

eminency, with God.) It is termed being 'taken up into glory,' and 'entering into his glory;' that is, into a most glorious place and state peculiar to him; that place which St. Peter calleth μεγαλοπρεπὴς δόξα, the magnificent, or most excellent glory. It is styled entering εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, into 'the most inward part behind the veil;' and into the τὰ ἅγια, the especially holy places; that is, into the inmost recesses of glory, inaccessible, and in degree incommunicable, to any other. He is said to have 'passed through the heavens,' (that is, through all places inferior to the highest top of glory and felicity;) to have ascended ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, 'over above all the heavens'; to have become higher than the heavens, or advanced above them: by which expressions it appeareth that the term of our Saviour's ascent, called heaven here, was that place of all places in the universe of things in situation most eminent, in quality most holy, in dignity most excellent, in glory most illustrious; the inmost sanctuary of God's temple above, not made with hands; the most august chamber of presence in the celestial court: and whereas there are, as our Lord telleth us, many mansions, or apartments, in the house of God, the chief and best of them our Lord hath taken up for his residence; whereas heaven is a place of vast extent, to the utmost top thereof our Lord hath ascended, even into that φῶς ἀπρόσιτον, inaccessible light where God dwelleth.

And there, as it followeth, 'he sitteth at God's right hand;' the meaning of which words it is not difficult to find out; it being obvious and clear that the state of things above, in the other blessed world, is in the Scripture represented to us by that similitude which is most apt to beget in us reverence toward God, and which indeed really doth most resemble it; by the state of a king here, sitting on his throne, being surrounded with personages of highest rank, worth, and respect; his nearest relations, his dearest favorites, the chief officers of his crown, and ministers of his affairs there attending on him; so that yet for distinction, some place more eminent, and signally honorable, is assigned to that person, to whom the King pleaseth to declare most especial favor and regard; the which place by custom, grounded on obvious reason, hath been of old, and con-

tinueth still, determined to the next place at the right hand; (the next place, because nearness yieldeth opportunity for all kind of conversation and address; at the right hand, because that hand hath advantage for strength and activity acquired by use, and therefore hath a special aptitude to offer any thing, or to receive, as occasion doth require:) hence for instance of the custom among those from whom the phrase is taken, when Bathsheba, king Solomon's mother, did come unto him, it is said, 'The king sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand:' thus our Lord, as man, in regard to his perfect obedience and patience, being raised by God to the supreme pitch of favor, honor, and power with him, God having 'advanced him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins;' having 'superexalted him, and bestowed on him a name above all names, to which all knees in heaven, in earth, and under the earth must bow;' having 'seated him in heavenly places above all principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and name that is named, either in the present world, or in that which is to come;' having 'committed to him all authority in heaven and on earth, and given all things into his hand;' having 'constituted him heir of all things, and subjected all things under his feet,' and 'crowned him with sovereign glory and honor;' having, in fine, given unto him all that which in the Revelation the innumerable host of heaven acknowlegeth him worthy of; power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;' that is, all good and excellency conceivable in the most eminent degree, so that γίνεται ἐν πᾶσι πρωτεύων, he 'in all things becometh to have the preeminence;' God having, I say, conferred all these preeminences of dignity, power, favor, and felicity on our Saviour, is therefore said to have 'seated him at his right hand;' 'at the right hand of power,' say the gospels; that is, so at the right hand of the Almighty Potentate, that all power is imparted to him for the governance and preservation of his church; 'at the right hand of the majesty on high,' and 'at the right hand of the throne of God,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews: that is, so at the right hand of the Sovereign

King of the world, that royal dignity is communicated to him; in regard to which all honor and worship, all service and obedience, are due to him from all creatures.

Thus much plainly the whole speech, 'sitting at God's right hand,' doth import; the which matter is otherwise more generally and simply expressed by being at God's right hand; 'Who,' saith St. Peter, 'is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him:' and, 'It is Christ,' saith St. Paul, 'that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God:' sometimes also our Lord is represented standing at God's right hand, as in the Revelation several times, and in the vision of St. Stephen, who 'saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;' the which posture doth then seem purposely assigned to him, when he is represented assisting his servants, or in readiness to achieve some great work for the good of his church; but most commonly, as in our text, it is called sitting; the which word in ordinary use denoteth an abode, or permanency, in any state: but there is, perhaps, some peculiar emphasis designed in attributing to our Lord that position; it implying the solid ground, the firm possession, the durable continuance, the undisturbed rest and quiet of that glorious condition, wherein he is instated: the term sitting may also seem to augment the main sense; for that sitting is the most honorable posture, and therefore implieth to the utmost that eminency of favor and regard which our Lord enjoyeth in God's sight. It may farther also denote the nature, quality, and design of our Lord's preferment; his being constituted our ruler and our judge; sitting being a posture most proper and peculiar to such persons; whence this expression representeth him as seated on a throne of majesty, or on a tribunal of justice.

I shall only farther observe that the attainment and settlement of our Lord in this high state is by one word frequently in Scripture called his glorification; 'The Spirit,' it is said, 'was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified:' and, 'When Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him:' and, 'The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified:' and, 'Now, Father,' prayeth our

Saviour, 'glorify me with thee, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;' that is, constitute me as mediator in glory supereminent above all creatures, accordingly as in my divine nature I was eternally with thee most gloriously happy: and, 'The God of your fathers,' saith St. Peter to the Jews, 'hath glorified his child Jesus, whom ye delivered up:' and, 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews. So much for explication of these points.

II. The confirmation of them may be drawn partly from ocular testimony, partly from rational deduction, partly from their correspondence to ancient presignifications and predictions.

The ascension of our Lord toward heaven was testified by the Apostles, who were eye-witnesses thereof; for βλεπόντων αὐτῶν, 'they beholding, he was,' saith St. Luke, 'taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.'

His arriving at the supreme pitch of glory, and sitting there, is deduced from the authority of his own word, and of his inspired disciples, the which standeth on the same grounds with other points of Christian faith and doctrine; the which it is not seasonable now to insist on.

But it may be proper and useful to consider how they (as all other important events and performances belonging to our Saviour) were by the Holy Spirit in the ancient prophets many ways presignified and predicted: that they were so, our Lord telleth us; 'Ought not Christ,' said he, 'according to what the prophets had spoken, to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?' and St. Peter assureth us that 'the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories after the same:' so indeed there were many signal types representing them, and many notable passages respecting them, interpreted according to analogy, with other mystical representations.

Isaac, the heir of promise, after his being devoted for sacrifice, and 'received from death in a parable,' was settled in a prosperous state of life, 'God being with him, and blessing him in all things.' Joseph, being freed from that death to which

by his envious brethren he was designed, and raised from that burial in prison into which by the Egyptian Gentiles he was cast, was advanced thence unto florishing dignity, and established in chief authority over the king's house, and 'over all the land.' Which persons, as they were in other things, so may they well be conceived in these respects to have been types of our Lord's ascension and glorification. Joshua, (who in name and performances was the most exact type of our Lord,) being preserved from the common fate of the people, and with miraculous victory over all the accursed enemies of God's people, entering as captain of Israel into the possession of the promised land, the sure type of heaven, doth fitly represent the glorious ascension of our Lord into heaven, and his everlasting possession thereof, together with the good people which follow his conduct. The great afflictions and depressions of David, with his restoration from them unto a mighty height of royal splendor and prosperity, (all enemies foreign and domestic being subdued,) may be also supposed to typify the same; his expressions in acknowlegement and thanksgiving for them seeming to allude hither, and to be more congruously applicable to our Lord than to himself: such for instance as those are in the 21st Psalm; 'He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever: his glory is great in thy salvation; honor and majesty hast thou laid on him; for thou hast made him most blessed for ever; thou hast made him exceedingly glad with thy countenance,' &c. Enoch, having 'walked with God,' (that is, in constant devotion and in faithful obedience to God's will,) and having 'received testimony that he pleased God, was taken unto God;' thereby prefiguring the ascension of the well-beloved, 'in whom God was most well pleased:' so was also the translation of Elijah into heaven, in presence of Elisha and other his disciples, after he most zealously had served God, in declaration of his will and maintenance of his truth, a manifest prelude of our Lord's like translation, after he had been employed in the like service, though far more high and important, and performed it in a more eminent manner.

The high priest was a certain type of our Lord, and the Jewish temple a shadow of heaven, and the holy of holies a

figure of the highest place in heaven; wherefore the high priest's sole and solemn entry once only in the year into the most holy place, after having by a bloody sacrifice made atonement 'for all the transgressions of the children of Israel, and his there sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat,' (the emblem of God's special presence,) doth certainly prefigure our Lord's ascending into heaven, and sitting there at God's right hand; there by representation of his merits and passion, performing the office of a most holy priest and gracious mediator for us: 'By his own blood,' saith the divine Apostle, 'he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;' 'He is entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'

Thus were these points aptly signified: they were also predicted: for David, in the 68th Psalm, celebrating the glorious triumphs of God over the enemies of his people, and in consequence on them his solemn entrance and seating himself in Sion, the hill 'which he delighteth to dwell in,' (the usual emblem of heaven,) subjoineth; 'Thou hast ascended on high,' (למרום, to the high place of heaven,) 'thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them:'* which words appositely suit to our Lord's triumphant ascension, after having subdued all the enemies of his Church, and on which he liberally dispensed wonderful gifts and graces to his people, and are by the unerring interpretation of St. Paul applied thereto.

The ascension of our Lord seemeth also (at least according to mystical exposition reasonably grounded) to be respected in the 24th Psalm, as generally throughout, so particularly in those words, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in:' where, according to the first and more literal sense, the entrance of the ark (the symbol of our Lord himself, in whom God is most specially present, 'in whom all the fulness of the

* Ps. lxviii. 18.

Godhead dwelleth bodily') into the temple is described: but in a second more elevate, more proper, and more full meaning, the entrance of our Lord (the true Shechinah) into heaven seemeth denoted; the doors of that temple not made with hands, into which he, the Lord of glory, at his ascension did enter, being indeed most truly 'the everlasting doors;' and the doors of the earthly temple being only such as typifying them.

Again, the session of our Lord at God's right hand is expressly foretold by David; 'The Lord,' saith he, 'said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I have made thine enemies thy footstool.' Who but the Messias could be that Lord of David, unto whom God spake? Who but he could be an eternal priest after the order of Melchizedek? Not only therefore our Lord himself expoundeth that place of the Messias, but the ancient Jews did commonly understand it to concern him; as appeareth by their tacit consent, and forbearing to contradict our Lord so interpreting it.

In fine, all the prophecies, which are very many, that concern the spiritual and eternal kingdom of the Messias, (his being invested with and exercising regal dignity and power over God's people for ever,) do in effect declare the ascension and session of our Lord; particularly those of David; 'I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion;' and, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre:' and that of Daniel; 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' So were these points foreshowed and foretold, to the manifestations of God's wisdom and the confirmation of our faith.

III. Now for the ends and effects of our Lord's ascension, and his abode in heaven at God's right hand, (I join them together as coincident, or subordinate,) they are in the Scripture declared to be chiefly these.

In general, our Lord by them was invested in the complete

exercise of all the offices, and in the full enjoyment of all the privileges, belonging to him as perfect Mediator, Sovereign, King, High Priest, and Archprophet of God's Church and people: he did initially and in part exercise those functions on earth; and a ground of enjoying those preeminences be laid here; but the intire execution and possession of all, by his ascension into heaven, and in his session there, he did obtain particularly.

1. Our Lord did ascend unto, and doth reside in heaven, at the right hand of divine majesty and power, that as a king he might govern us, protecting us from all danger, relieving us in all want, delivering us from all evil; that he might subdue and destroy all the enemies of his kingdom and our salvation; the Devil with all his retinue, the world, the flesh, sin, death, and hell; whatever doth oppose his glory, his truth, his service; whatever consequently, by open violence or fraudulent practice, doth hinder our salvation: 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I have made thine enemies thy footstool;' so God by the Holy Spirit in David did speak unto him: whence St. Peter doth thus infer; 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him Lord and Christ;' that is, his being seated in that place of special eminency is an infallible argument of his royal majesty and sovereignty: and, 'This man,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool;' and accordingly, 'He must,' as St. Paul saith, 'reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet.' By various combats in his life, our Lord did worst and weaken his and our enemies; and in the last great battle on his cross, he did thoroughly rout and overthrow them; but by his triumphant ascension into heaven 'he led captivity captive,' enjoying the glory and benefit of his victory; by sitting at God's right hand he keepeth them down in irrecoverable subjection under his feet, so that none of them can make any successful insurrection against him: for no power certainly shall ever be able to withstand his will and command, who sitteth at the helm of sovereignty immense and omnipotent; at that right hand, which can do any thing, which

wieldeth and moderateth all things every where; no fraud can elude, no secret conspiracy can escape his knowlege, who, sitting in that heavenly watch-tower of infinite wisdom and omniscience, beholdeth whatever is done, said, or thought in all the world.

He so there with royal might protecteth us; and with royal goodness, munificence, and clemency, he doth also thence dispense grace and mercy to his faithful subjects: for all good gifts and graces bestowed on the Church in general for common edification, and to each member thereof singly for its particular benefit, which are useful for perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of Christ's body in truth, holiness, order, and peace, are expressed to proceed from our Lord's ascension; 'To every one of you,' saith St. Paul, 'is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;' that is, to every one of you proportionably, according to the quality of your employment, rank, or station in the Church, and according to the particular exigency of your needs, as Christ in wisdom seeth fit, grace is afforded; in correspondence, addeth he, to the Psalmist's prophecy concerning our Saviour, 'Having ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'

Particularly in virtue or consequence of his ascension and glorification, to all true penitents and converts unto God, mercy, and pardon for their sins are dispensed: that repentance should be acceptable to God, and available for attainment of mercy, our Lord did indeed merit for us by his suffering; but he effectually dispenseth it in God's name, being now instated in glory, as a noble boon of his royal clemency; 'God,' saith St. Peter, 'exalted him as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.'

2. Our Saviour did ascend, and now sitteth at God's right hand, that he may, in regard to us, there exercise his priestly function. Having in this outward tabernacle once offered up himself a pure and perfect sacrifice for the expiation of our sins, he entered within the veil, into the most holy place, there presenting his blood before God himself, to the full effect of obtaining mercy for us, and restoring us to God's favor; 'He is,' saith the Apostle, 'entered into heaven itself, there to appear

in the presence of God for us;' so that whenever we by our frailty do fall into sin, and do heartily by repentance turn unto God, invoking his mercy, our Lord is ready, by applying the virtue of his sacrifice, and pleading our cause with God, on the terms of that gracious covenant purchased and ratified by his blood, to procure mercy for us: for, 'If any man sin, we have,' saith St. John, 'an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world:' and, 'Who,' saith St. Paul, 'is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;' that is, seeing our Lord hath offered a well-pleasing sacrifice for our sins, and doth at God's right hand continually renew it, by presenting it unto God, and interceding with him for the effect thereof; what, supposing us qualified for mercy, can hinder us from obtaining it?

Our Lord also doth at God's right hand discharge the princely ministry of praying for us, and so interceding in our behalf, as thereby to acquire from God to be conferred on us whatever is needful or conducible to our salvation; 'He,' saith the Apostle, 'is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.' More particularly he, by his mediation there, doth procure for us a free access to God in devotion, a favorable reception of our petitions and services, a good success of them in the supply of all our needs; for, 'Through him we have access by the Spirit unto the Father;' and, 'Having a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in the time of need,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews: and, He, as he is represented in the Apocalypse, is that angel of the covenant, who at the golden altar before God doth offer up the prayers of the saints incensed by his mediation and merits.

Hence in his name and through him it is, that we are enjoined to present our prayers, our thanksgivings, and all our services; 'doing all, whatever we do, in the name of the Lord Jesus.'

3. Again, our Lord telleth us that it was necessary he should depart hence, and enter into this glorious state, that he

might there exercise his prophetical office, by imparting to us his Holy Spirit for our instruction, direction, assistance, and comfort; 'Behold,' said he on his departure, 'I send the promise of my Father on you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with the power from on high:' this he promised then to his disciples, but did not perform until his exaltation; 'Being therefore,' saith St. Peter, 'exalted to the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' He did not, and indeed (in consistence with the divine purpose and the designed economy of things) could not perform this until then; 'It is,' said he, 'expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you:' that is, God, for promoting our Saviour's honor, and for the glory of his undertaking, had in his wisdom determined that so incomparably excellent a gift should be the reward of his obedience, the consequence of his triumph, the effect of his intercession above, an ornament of his royal state, a pledge of his princely munificence: it was reserved as a most rich and majestic gratuity, fit to be conferred at his coronation, then when he solemnly was inaugurated to sovereign dignity, and invested with power superlative: whence, 'The Holy Spirit,' it is said in St. John, 'was not yet,' (that is, it was not yet poured forth, or bestowed in that conspicuous manner and copious measure, as God intended it should be afterwards,) 'because Jesus was not yet glorified:' it was from Jesus being received into glory, and advanced to God's right hand, that so transcendent a boon was in God's purpose, and according to his promise, designed to come down.

4. Again, our Lord himself telleth us that he went to heaven, there to prepare a place for his faithful servants, to prepare mansions of joy and bliss in God's presence, 'where is fulness of joy; at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore.' He accordingly hath, as the Apostle saith, entered as our πρόδρομος, 'our forerunner into heaven;' as an honorable harbinger, having disposed things there for our reception and entertainment; or rather, as the son and heir of that great house, he by his authority and interest there procured leave for

us to enter, and reside there, or carrieth us as his retinue thither; 'It is my will,' saith he, 'that where I am, there should ye be also; that he may contemplate my glory,' and consequently may partake thereof. It was indeed our Lord's ascension which did unlock the gates of heaven, before shut on us by our sins; which quenched the flaming sword, and discharged the mighty cherubim, which guarded paradise from all access to men.*

The ancient Fathers generally were of opinion that heaven, before our Lord's ascension, was inaccessible;† and that no man had ever set foot therein, until our Lord, by his actual ascent and ingress, did open the passage thither, and remove the bars there:‡ to prove this, they allege that of our Lord in St. John; 'No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven:' and the forecited place, 'I go to prepare a place for you;' which seemeth to imply heaven before unfit to receive men: and those places, wherein our Lord affirmeth himself to be 'the gate of the sheep,' and 'the way to the Father:' and that of the Apostle to the Hebrews, concerning the Patriarchs, and other good men before Christ's incarnation; 'And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be perfect.' Hither also they referred that of the Psalmist, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in:' which words they interpreted to signify the gates of heaven then to have been first opened, when our Lord did ascend thither.§ Joshua, a most congruous type of our Lord, leading God's people into the land of promise, did also to their sense imply our Lord's first entering into heaven. The high priest alone entering into the sanctuary, did, as they

* Flammea illa rhomphæa, custos paradisi, et præsidentia foribus Cherubim Christi restincta, et reserata sunt sanguine.—Hier. Ep. 3.

† Οὐρανὸς ἔτι ἦν ἄβατος.—Chrys. ad Heb. ix. 8.

‡ Ante Christum Abraham apud inferos, post Christum latro in paradiso, &c.—Hier. in Epitaph. Nepot. Ep. 3.

§ Ὅταν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη Χριστὸς, καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, κελεύονται οἱ ἐν οὐρανῷ ταχθέντες ἄγγελοι ἀνοίξαι τὰς πύλας τῶν οὐρανῶν.—Just. M.

deemed, argue the same; the Apostle to the Hebrews seeming much to favor their sentiment, when he saith, 'Into the second (tabernacle) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, whilst the first tabernacle was yet standing.' The same also was, say they, signified by those persons, who, for offences wide of malice, were detained in the cities of refuge, and prohibited to return home, until the death of the high priest, but were afterward restored to the land of their possession; thereby, say they, being intimated that until after our Saviour's death no man could return into paradise, his primitive home, from which man for his sin had been excluded; but that thenceforth all persons, in an evangelical account, not malicious or wicked, had a right and liberty to return thither. On these and the like grounds did the Fathers commonly suppose no person before our Lord's ascension to have entered heaven; but however it were as to the time, yet assuredly, in order of nature and causality, it was he that did first ascend thither; and by virtue of his ascension it is, that any man ever did or shall ever come thither; 'His blood was,' as St. Hierome saith, 'the key of paradise;' the efficacy of which he carrying up with him did unlock it; so that thenceforth it doth stand wide open to those who can soar up thither, following his steps in persevering obedience. 'Having therefore,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart:' and, 'He, being perfected,' (or consummated in his state of glory,) 'became to all that obey him the author of everlasting salvation; being denominated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.'

5. It was indeed an effect of our Lord's ascension and glorification, that all good Christians are with him in a sort translated into heaven, and advanced into a glorious state; being thence by him 'made kings and priests to God.' 'We have,'

saith Tertullian, in 'Christ Jesus seized on heaven:'* and the Apostle saith as much; 'Us,' saith he, 'who were dead in trespasses and sins, God hath quickened together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' In many respects we thereby are raised to heaven and eminent glory.

We thence even as men become greatly dignified, our nature being so highly advanced thereby: we thereby get the honor of being brethren or kinsmen to the world's great Lord and King; so that any of us may say with St. Austin, 'Where my flesh reigns, there I believe myself to reign:' hence, as the Apostle to the Hebrews teacheth us, is that of the psalmist verified concerning man; 'Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands.'

We also more as Christians are elevated thereby by our near relation to him, and our participation with him as our head; for where the head is, there the body is: they are inseparably connected; there can be no breach, no distance between them; and the honor conferred on the head doth necessarily accrue to the members; according to St. Paul's rule, 'If one member be glorified, all the members do rejoice with it,' or do partake of its joyful state. *Christi ascensio nostra est provectio,* 'The ascension of Christ is our preferment; and whither the glory of the head is gone before, thither likewise is the hope of the body called,' saith a devout Father.†

We also are by our Lord's glorification advanced and advantaged, in that his being so glorified is a sure pledge and an earnest of that glorious reward which all good Christians shall receive. 'Christ being made heir of all things,' did in his ascension, *adire hæreditatem,* take possession of that inheritance; and we consequently, as co-heirs with him, and 'having a share in the inheritance of the saints in light,' do seize thereon, acquiring therein a right and propriety at present, being assured in due time (if by our miscarriages we do not forfeit our title) of an actual possession thereof; 'As,' saith Tertullian, 'Christ did leave to us the earnest of the Spirit, so he re-

* Tert. de Res. c. 51. † Leo P.

ceived from us the earnest of the flesh, and carried it into heaven as a pledge of the whole sum to be sometime brought in thither.'*

We do also in a manner ascend with Christ to heaven, in regard that by his ascension our principal concernments, our only considerable interests, (that κρείττων ὕπαρξις καὶ μένουσα, 'better and enduring substance,') the true objects of our affection, and all our hope, are transferred thither; whence heaven becometh our only true country, our abiding city, our real home: we having here no true rest, no settled mansion, no certain estate; but indeed being strangers, sojourners, and pilgrims on earth. Our πολίτευμα, our politic capacity, relates to heaven, or we are citizens thereof, saith St. Paul; we are 'fellow-citizens of the saints, and domestics of God;' are 'proselytes to mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the metropolis of the saints, the heavenly Jerusalem;' we are 'translated into the kingdom of God's beloved Son,' are 'called into his kingdom and glory,' have 'our hope laid up for us in heaven,' are dead to this world, and 'our life is hid with Christ in God:' and where we are so concerned, there especially in spirit and heart we may be supposed to be.

6. I might add that God did thus advance our Saviour, to declare the special regard he beareth to piety, righteousness, and obedience, by his so amply rewarding and highly dignifying the practice thereof. 'We,' saith the Apostle, 'see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.' We see him, not only as an object of our contemplation, but as a pattern of our practice, and as a ground of our encouragement; 'Looking up,' saith that Apostle again, 'unto Jesus, the captain and the perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.' God, it seemeth, did intend, and he doth propound our Lord's exaltation, for an engagement and motive to us of following him in the way by which he attained it; giving us assuredly to hope for the like rewards of glory and joy, in proportion answerable to our imitation of his exemplary obedience and patience.

* Tertull. de Resurr. c. 51.

Such are the principal ends and effects of our Lord's ascension, and session at God's right hand; the consideration of which points may have great use, should have much influence on our practice.

1. It may serve to guard us from divers errors, which to the dangerous prejudice and disparagement of our religion (introducing into it notions thwarting reason and sense, charging it with needless and groundless incredibilities, exposing it to difficulties and objections so massy that the foundations of Christian truth are scarce able to support them) have been and are asserted by divers persons, or by sects of men professing Christianity, such as are that of the old Eutychians, who held that the human nature of our Lord was converted into his divinity, or swallowed up thereby; that of the German Ubiquitaries, who say that our Lord according to his human nature corporally doth exist everywhere; that of the Lutheran Consubstantialists, and of the Roman Transubstantiators, who affirm that the body of our Lord is here on earth at once present in many places, (namely, in every place where the Host is kept, or the Eucharist is celebrated:) which assertions, by the right understanding of these points, will appear to be false. For our Lord did visibly in human shape ascend to heaven, (which to do is inconsistent with the invisible, omnipresent, and immoveable nature of God,) and therefore he continueth still a man; and as such he abideth in heaven, and therefore he doth not exist everywhere or otherwhere. It is the property of a creature to have a definite existence, or to be only in one place at one time; for could it be in divers places at once, it might by like reason be in any or in every place, and consequently it might be immense; nor can we conceive a thing to be at once in several distant places, without its being multiplied in essence: it especially is repugnant to the nature of a body at once to possess several places, seeing its substance and quantity do not really differ, or are inseparably combined, whence it cannot be multiplied in dimensions answerable to many localities, without being multiplied in substance; wherefore since our Lord, as man, did by a proper local motion ascend, pass through, and enter into the heavens, (being, as it is said in holy Scripture, in the visible form and dimensions of his body, taken, carried,

lifted up, gone into heaven, parting from his disciples, 'going away from us,' 'leaving the world' and 'going to the Father;' being 'where no man here can come, or can follow him;' being to be 'no more in the world,' so that 'we have him not always with us;' being there where 'we, being in the body, are absent from him;' seeing he doth now reside in heaven, which must, as St. Peter affirmed, receive (or hold) him, 'until the restitution of all things;' where he constantly 'appeareth in God's presence for us,' and 'ever liveth to make intercession for us;' whence also we do expect that in the like visible manner as he went, that he shall come again, 'descending,' as St. Paul speaketh, 'from heaven,' and 'coming in the clouds of heaven,' at the last resurrection and judgment, which is therefore commonly termed his presence and appearance here;) since, I say, according to the tenor of Scripture, our Lord did thus, as man, in his flesh go into heaven, and there perpetually doth abide in glory, until he shall thence return hither to judge the world, we must not suppose him to be anywhere corporally on earth. He is indeed everywhere by his Divinity present with us; he is also in his humanity present to our faith, to our memory, to our affection; he is therein also present by mysterious representation, by spiritual efficacy, by general inspection and influence on his church; but in body, as we are absent from him, so is he likewise separated from us; we 'must depart hence, that we may be with him,' in the place whither 'he is gone to prepare for us.' 'Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down' thence? saith St. Paul, intimating where he doth immovably abide, in exclusion to all other places. These things, (beside many other strong reasons) if we do consider, it will suffice to guard us from those rampant absurdities, which so long, with such impudence and such violence, have outbraved plain reason and sense. But to leave this, and to come to more practical applications.

2. Is Christ ascended and advanced to this glorious eminency at God's right hand? Then let us answerably behave ourselves toward him, rendering him the honor and worship, the fear and reverence, the service and obedience suitable and due to that his state. In regard hereto all the angels of God are commanded to adore him; and they willingly submit there-

to, acknowleging him to deserve the highest worship; 'Every creature (it is in the Revelation) in heaven, in earth, and under the earth,' doth in its way send acclamations of blessing and praise unto him. And shall we then refuse or neglect to do the like? we, who of all creatures in equity and gratitude are most obliged, who in reason and interest are most concerned to honor him, as ourselves receiving most honor and advantage from his exaltation? Shall we be backward in yielding obedience to him, who is in nature so nearly related to us, and in affection so well disposed toward us; who, out of tender good-will toward us, hath undertaken this high charge, and exerciseth it with design to do us good; who therefore especially is pleased to sit at the helm, that he may protect us from all the enemies of our welfare, and that he may settle us in the enjoyment of happiness? Shall we dare to oppose his will, and not dread to displease him, to whom 'all power in heaven and earth is given;' whose will is executed by the irresistible right hand of God; who therefore can easily check us in our bad courses, and will surely chastise us for our disobedience? We do plainly hereby incur the heinous guilt, and shall surely undergo the grievous punishment, of rebellion; this being the sentence which, refusing subjection to him, we shall one day hear and feel: 'Those mine enemies, that would not have me reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.'

3. These points do afford ground and matter of great joy and comfort to us. Have we not cause to rejoice that our Lord hath obtained so absolute and glorious a victory over all our cruel enemies? Should we not with joyful gratulation applaud the triumphs of goodness over wickedness, of charity over malice, of mercy over wrath, of life and happiness over death and misery? Is it not matter of huge satisfaction that one of our kind and kindred, who beareth toward us the bowels of a man and the affection of a brother, who hath yielded so wonderful expressions of good-will and charity toward us, who so loved us as to lay down his life for us, is raised to such preferment? Shall we not be pleased that we have so good a friend in so high place and so great power; or that he who is so willing, is also so able to do us good? Have we not great cause to acquiesce in our subjection to so just, so mild, so

gracious a Governor; 'the sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre,' whose 'yoke is easy, and burden light?' Shall we not be glad, considering that we have so merciful and so kind an intercessor always resident with God, always ready to do good offices for us at the throne of grace? Considering this, what is there that can be or happen in the world that should displease, discourage, or disturb us? What enemies should we fear, since all our enemies lie prostrate under his feet? What good can we fear to want, since all things are at his disposal, and all good is dispensed by him? What events should trouble us, since all things are managed and ordered by his good hand? Will he suffer any thing to hurt us? Will he see us need any convenience? Will he let us be oppressed by any mischief or distress, whose office it is and continual care to protect and succor us? Have we not, in contemplation of these things, abundant reason to comply with that precept, of 'rejoicing in the Lord always?' Be our case in this world what it will, considering where our Lord is, we have great cause to be cheerful, according to that injunction of our Lord, enforced by this consideration; 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'

4. The consideration of these things serveth to cherish and strengthen all kind of faith and hope in us. If the resurrection of our Saviour might beget in us a strong persuasion concerning the truth of our Lord's doctrine, and a lively hope of salvation from his undertakings and performances for us, his ascension and session in glory (confirmed by the same indubitable testimonies and authorities) must needs nourish, improve, and corroborate them. We cannot surely distrust the accomplishment of any promises declared by him, we cannot despair of receiving any good from him, who is ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of divine wisdom and divine power, thence viewing all things done here, thence ordering all things every where for the advantage of those who love him and trust in him.

It especially doth serve to quicken in us that 'blessed hope,' as St. Paul calleth it, of a joyful and happy rest after the troubles and sorrows of this wretched life; 'which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and

which entereth into that within the veil; where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'

5. These points do likewise serve to excite and encourage our devotion: for having such a mediator in heaven, so near God's presence, so much in God's favor; having so good and sure a friend at court, having such a Master of requests ever ready to present up, to recommend, and to further our petitions, what should deter, what should anywise withhold us from cheerfully, on all occasions, by him addressing ourselves to God? We may therefore, as we are exhorted by the Apostle, 'come to the throne of grace with boldness, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable aid.' We cannot, considering this, anywise doubt of those promises being effectually made good to us; 'Whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive; whatsoever ye ask in my name, that will I do.' There is nothing which he, enjoying such power, cannot do for us; and there is nothing which he, our loving and merciful brother, will not do, that is good for us, if we do with humble confidence apply ourselves to him for it. And what greater incitement can there be to devotion, than an assurance so firmly grounded of fair acceptance and happy success thereof? Yea, what an extreme folly, what a huge crime is it, not to make use of such an advantage, not by so obliging an inducement to be moved to a constant practice of this so beneficial and sweet kind of duties?

6. It may encourage us to all kind of obedience, to consider what a high pitch of eternal glory and dignity our Lord hath obtained, in regard to his obedience, and as a pledge of like recompense designed to us, if we tread in his footsteps, 'running the race that is set before us, and looking up unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God.' As God, in respect to what he should perform, did offer to him so high a promotion; so doth he likewise, on condition of our obedience to his commandments, oblige himself to put us into a like excellent and happy state: so our Lord himself declared, when he said, 'I covenant to you a kingdom, as my Father covenanted to me a kingdom:' it goeth before, 'Ye are they which have

continued with me in my temptations:' there is the condition, faithful and constant adherence to Christ in doing and suffering; on performance of which condition our Lord tendereth that glorious reward of an eternal kingdom: and the divine covenant being thus effectually fulfilled unto him, doth ascertain us that his overture will likewise be made good to us; 'It is,' saith St. Paul, 'a faithful saying, (that is, a word on which we may confidently rely,) if we be dead with him, (dead to sin and vanity,) we shall also live with him, (live with him in glory and joy;) if we endure, (or persevere in obedience and patience after him,) we shall also reign with him:' and, 'To him (saith our Lord in the Revelation) that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.'

7. Lastly, the consideration of these points should elevate our thoughts and affections from these inferior things here (the vain and base things of this world) unto heavenly things; according to that of St. Paul; 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.' To the head of our body we should be joined; continually deriving sense and motion, direction and activity from him: where the master of our family is, there should our minds be, constantly attentive to his pleasure, and ready to serve him; where the city is whose denizens we are, and where our final rest must be, there should our thoughts be, careful to observe the laws and orders, that we may enjoy the immunities and privileges thereof; in that country where only we have any good estate or valuable concernment, there our mind should be, studying to secure and improve our interest therein: our resolution should be conformable to that of the holy psalmist; 'I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help.' 'Christ is our life,' saith St. Paul; and shall our souls be parted from our life? 'Christ,' saith he again, 'is our hope;' and shall our mind and hope be asunder? Christ is the principal object of our love, of our trust, of our joy, of all our best affections; and shall our affections be severed from their best objects? By his being in heaven all our treasure becometh there; 'and where our treasure is, there' (if we apprehend and believe rightly, there naturally) 'our hearts will be also:' if they be

not, it is a sign we take him not for our best treasure. 'We do in our bodies sojourn from the Lord,' as St. Paul saith; but in our spirits we may and should be ever present, ever conversant with him; contemplating him with an eye of faith, fastening our love on him, reposing our confidence in him, directing our prayers and thanksgivings to him; meditating on his good laws, his gracious promises, his holy life, and his merciful performances for us. We should not, by fixing our hearts and desires on earthly things, (on the vain delights, the sordid interests, the fallacious and empty glories, the sinful enjoyments here,) nor by a dull and careless neglect of heavenly things, avert, estrange, or separate ourselves wholly from him. No, *sursum corda*, let us, unloosing our hearts from these things, and with them soaring upward, follow and adhere to our Lord; so shall we anticipate that blessed future state, so shall we assure to ourselves the possession of heaven; so here enjoying our Lord in affection, we shall hereafter obtain a perfect fruition of his glorious and blissful presence; the which God of his mercy by his grace vouchsafe us, through the same our ever blessed Saviour; to whom be for ever all glory and praise. Amen.

'O God the King of glory, who hast exalted thine own Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven; we beseech thee leave us not comfortless, but send thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us to the same place whither our Saviour Jesus Christ is gone before; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXII.

ECCLESIASTES, CHAP. III.—VERSE 17.

THESE words stated to have been the result of a serious contemplation on the state of human affairs and common occurrences in this world: various observations on the same. The reasonableness and equity of a future judgment entered on, and shown.

1. Seeing that all men come hither without any knowlege or choice; having their life, as it were, obtruded on them; and seeing ordinarily that the pains of this life overbalance its pleasures, &c.; it seems but equitable that men should be put into a capacity of bettering their state hereafter, by means of their good behavior here; otherwise God might seem not to have dealt fairly with his creatures.

2. Seeing that man is endued with a free choice and power over his actions, and thence capable of deserving well or ill, it is just that a respective difference be made, according to due estimation, &c.

3. Seeing that there is a natural subordination of man to God, it is just that men should be accountable for the performance or violation of their obligations.

4. Seeing also that there are natural relations of men to one another, and various duties thence ensuing, it is fit that a reference of such cases should be made to the common Patron of right, &c.

5. Whereas there are many secret good actions and dispositions, to which no profit or pleasure is annexed; and likewise

many bad ones concealed or disguised, so as to have no check, disgrace, or damage here; it is most equal that both kinds should be disclosed and recompensed hereafter.

6. There are also persons who, though highly offensive to God and man, cannot be reached by human laws, on account of their authority, power, &c.

7. Hence equity requires that a judgment should pass on the deeds of men; and this the common opinions, and the private dictates of each man's conscience attest, &c.

8. Every man also who has committed any notable crime, naturally accuses himself, and in his own heart sentences himself to punishment; whilst the virtuous man anticipates the blessings of reward, &c.

Other reasons adduced why it is requisite men should have an apprehension of a future judgment, and consequently that such an one should really be.

1. It is needful to engage us in the practice of any virtue, and to restrain us from any vice; for without it, no consideration of reason, no provision of law here, can be available for those purposes: this fully shewn.

2. Whence manifestly the same supposition is also needful to the welfare of human society; the which, without the practice of justice, fidelity, and other virtues, can hardly subsist, &c.

3. Farther, it is shown that no authority, on whatever reason or equity grounded, if it do not present competent encouragement to obedient subjects, if it do not hold forth an armed hand, menacing proper chastisement to the refractory, will be able to sustain the respect due to it: this applied to the doctrine in question.

Case of the Jews considered, who could not be kept in obedience, though God declared his law to them in the most awful manner, and inforced his will with promises of the greatest possible blessings, and with menaces of the greatest mischiefs

which this life can afford. This observation applied to the Pagans.

But beyond these things, this doctrine is very needful, to secure the very foundation of all religion and piety, the existence of God, and his providence over human affairs.

Without this, it is shown how difficult it would be to answer the objections that might be made, on the score of suffering virtue and prosperous vice, &c.

Not only on blind Pagans and profane persons, but even on the most pious of God's people, such objections have made impression, exterting from them expostulations like those of the prophet: (Jer. xii. 1.) This subject enlarged on.

Divine goodness and justice vindicated in these respects; it being shown that when good men suffer they are made fitter for, and attain a surer title to, those excellent rewards, which he on trial and approbation of their virtues does intend for them, &c. Whilst in reference to the impunity of bad men, and the prevalence of iniquity here, that which cured David, Job, and Solomon, may satisfy us: *going into the sanctuary, and understanding the end of these men;* considering that *the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction,* &c.

From this doctrine we may learn that God in this great drama, in order to the great catastrophe in the last act, doth mean to let men go on playing their parts undisturbedly, within that proper check of his hand which prevents confusion of all things.

That it is not fit therefore now by open significations, either of approbation or dislike, often to interrupt the process of human actions.

Whence it is not to be wondered at, if God here should be somewhat reserved in dispensing testimonies of favor to the righteous, and in consuming sinners on every provocation, as angry man would have him do.

That this life is not a time of reaping, but of sowing; not of approbation, but of trial; not of triumph, but of combat, &c.

That ordinarily temporal prosperity and adversity can be no arguments of God's special favor or displeasure.

That God rather means to vilify these present things, which appear to our sense good or evil, by scattering them abroad with an indifferent hand.

That there is no reason to complain, though justice seems at present to sleep, since right, though here it may be foiled and crossed, shall not be finally overthrown; that no good design shall be undertaken, no honest labor spent in vain, &c.

That this life is not contemptible, nor all things belonging to it vain, seeing that on it is founded our eternal state, and all things here will conduce to the illustration of divine justice.

Brief recapitulation of the arguments by which it appears fit and needful that there should be a future judgment. Conclusion.

From thence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.

SERMON XXXII.

THE REASONABLENESS AND EQUITY OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT.

ECCLESIASTES, CHAP. III.—VERSE 17.

I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.

THESE words are the result of a serious contemplation on the state of human affairs and common occurrences in this world: the royal philosopher having, as he telleth us, 'given his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that were done under heaven;' what was the proper nature, what the just price of each thing; what real benefit or solid comfort each did afford; how every person did fare in the pursuit and success of his designs; did, after full examination and careful balancing all things, resolve on such conclusions as these:

That no kind of undertaking here did in effect yield any considerable profit or complete satisfaction, but all in the issue did prove vain and vexatious.

That no man from his care and industry, in any course of life, could promise himself any certain success, or reap answerable reward.

That although between wisdom and folly (or between goodness and wickedness) there is some intrinsic difference of worth ('one excelling the other, as light doth excel darkness,') yet,

as to external advantages, and as to final event here, there is no great odds discernible; for that events (prosperous and adverse) did appear to fall out, not according to the qualifications or to the practices of men, but indifferently, according to the swinge of time and chance; and for that death and oblivion alike do seize on all; so that apparently, in that respect, 'a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast.'

That in common life nothing doth appear better than for a man, with the best advantage he can, to enjoy ordinary sensible delights and comforts, which his condition doth afford.

That in regard to the present things here, life were not desirable to any man, the inconveniences and troubles thereof outweighing its benefits; so that even the wisest, greatest, and happiest persons (such as he himself was) had cause 'to hate life, and all their labor which they had taken under the sun.'

That the mind and affection of God toward men are very reserved; the course of Providence very abstruse, the reason of events unsearchable to the wit or study of men; so that we can hardly from appearances here descry any conspicuous marks of God's favor or his displeasure.

From these observations, as from so many arguments, he doth both here and otherwhere in several places of this book infer that there shall be a divine judgment, passing on all men, both righteous and wicked; whereby these seeming incongruities in the providential administration of things shall be salved; and in regard whereto our present opinions of things may be rectified: this he interposed here, 'I said in my heart, (that is, by the consideration of things I was persuaded,) that God shall judge the righteous and the wicked:' this he ever now and then toucheth, as incident to his meditations: this he in the close of all proposeth as the grand inducement to piety, and obedience to God's commandments; 'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

This judgment he expresseth indefinitely, so as not to determine the kind or time thereof; and as to the absolute force of his words, it may signify the decree of God, to reward or punish

men here in this life according to their deserts, the which in holy Scripture is commonly styled God's judgment; but the force of his arguments (or at least of some of them) plainly doth infer a future judgment after death; and so therefore I shall take his sense to be, grounding thereon this observation, that from a wise consideration of human affairs, and obvious events here, we may collect the reasonableness, the equity, the expediency, the moral and prudential necessity of a future judgment, according to which men shall receive due recompenses, answerable to their demeanor in this life: this observation it shall be my endeavor by God's help to declare, and prove by arguments deduced from the reason and nature of things.

First then, I say, it is reasonable and equal that there should be a future judgment: this will appear on many accounts.

1. Seeing all men come hither without any knowlege or choice, having their life, as it were, obtruded on them; and seeing ordinarily (according to the general complaints of men) the pains of this life do overbalance its pleasures; so that it seemeth, in regard to what men find here, a punishment to be born; it seemeth also thence equal that men should be put into a capacity, on their good behavior in this troublesome state, of a better state hereafter, in compensation for what they endure here; otherwise God might seem not to have dealt fairly with his creatures; and we might have some color to expostulate, with Job; 'Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul? Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?'

2. Seeing man is endued with a free choice and power over his actions, and thence by a good or bad use thereof is capable of deserving well or ill, it is just that a respective difference be made, according to due estimation; and that men answerably should be proceeded with either here or hereafter, reaping the fruits of what they voluntarily did sow. There is a natural relation between merits and rewards, which must come under taxation, and find effect, otherwise there would be no such thing as justice and injustice in the world.

3. Seeing there is a natural subordination of man to God, as of a creature to his maker, as of a subject or servant to his lord, as of a client or dependent to his patron, protector, and benefactor, whence correspondent obligations do result; it is just that men should be accountable for the performance, and for the violation or neglect of them; so as accordingly either to receive approbation or to be obliged to render satisfaction; respectively, as they have done right and paid respect to God, or as they have offered to wrong and dishonor him; otherwise those relations would seem vain and idle.

4. Seeing also there are natural relations of men to one another, and frequent transactions between them, founding several duties of humanity and justice; the which may be observed or transgressed; so that some men shall do, and others suffer much injury, without any possible redress from otherwhere, it is fit that a reference of such cases should be made to the common Patron of right, and that by him they should be so decided, that due amends should be made to one party, and fit correction inflicted on the other; according to that of St. Paul; 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you: and to you who are troubled rest with us, in the revelation of our Lord Jesus.'

5. Whereas also there are many secret good actions, many inward good dispositions, good wishes, and good purposes, unto which here no honor, no profit, no pleasure, no sort of benefit is annexed, or indeed well can be, (they being indiscernible to men;) there are likewise many bad practices and designs concealed or disguised, so as necessarily to pass away without any check, any disgrace, any damage or chastisement here; it is most equal that hereafter both these kinds should be disclosed, and obtain answerable recompense.

6. There are also persons whom, although committing grievous wrong, oppression, and other heinous misdemeanors, offensive to God and man, yet, by reason of the inviolable sacredness of their authority, or because of their uncontrollable power, no justice here can reach, not punishment can touch; who therefore should be reserved to the impartial and irresistible judgment of God; and fit it is, that (for satisfaction of justice, and distinction of such, from those who contrariwise

behave themselves well) a Tophet should be prepared for them.

7. On these and the like accounts, equity requireth that a judgment should pass on the deeds of men; and thereto the common opinions of men and the private dictates of each man's conscience do attest: for all men seeing any person to demean himself brutishly and unworthily, committing heinous disorders and outrages, are apt to pronounce it unfit that such an one should escape with impunity: likewise when innocent and good persons (who do no harm, and do what good they can) do suffer, or do enjoy no benefit thence, it is a pity, will any indifferent person be ready to say, that such a man's case should not be considered; that some reparation or some reward should not be allotted to him: the which apprehensions of men are in effect the verdicts of common sense concerning the equity of a judgment to be.

8. Every man also having committed any notable misdemeanor, (repugnant to piety, justice, or sobriety,) doth naturally accuse himself for it, doth in his heart sentence himself to deserve punishment, and doth stand possessed with a dread thereof; so, even unwillingly, avouching the equity of a judgment, and by a forcible instinct presaging it to come. As likewise he that hath performed any virtuous or honest action, doth not only rest satisfied therein, but hath raised in him a strong hope of benefit to come from heaven in recompense thereof; the which apprehensions and hopes do involve an opinion that it is reasonable a judgment should be. All which considerations (seeing it is manifest that there is not generally or frequently any such exact judgment or dispensation of rewards in this life, nor perhaps, without changing the whole frame of things and course of Providence, can well be) do therefore infer the fitness and equity of a future judgment.

It is farther, on divers accounts, requisite and needful that men should have an apprehension concerning such a judgment appointed by God, and consequently that such an one should really be. It is requisite toward the good conduct of human affairs here, or to engage men to the practice of virtue; it is necessary to the maintaining any belief concerning religion, or

sense of piety: without it therefore no convenient society among men can be well upheld.

1. It is, I say, needful to engage men on the practice of any virtue, and to restrain them from any vice; for that indeed without it, no consideration of reason, no provision of law here, can be much available to those purposes. He that will consider the nature of men, or observe their common practice, (marking what apprehensions usually steer them, what inclinations sway them, in their elections and pursuits of things,) shall, I suppose, find that from an invincible principle of self-love, or sensuality, deriving itself through all their motions of soul, and into all their actions of life, men generally do so strongly propend to the enjoyment of present sensible goods, that nothing but a presumption of some considerable benefit to be obtained by abstinence from them, or of some grievous mischief consequent on the embracing them, can withhold them from pursuing such enjoyment. From hence (seeing fancy, reason, and experience do all prompt men to a foresight of events, and force them to some regard of the consequences of things) it followeth that hope and fear are the main springs which set on work all the wheels of human action; so that any matter being propounded, if men can hope that it will yield pleasant or profitable (that is, tending to pleasant) fruits, they will undertake it; if they do fear its consequences will be distasteful or hurtful, they will decline it: very rare it is to find that the love or liking of a thing, as in itself amiable to the mind, or suitable to reason, doth incline men thereto; that honest things, bare of present advantages, and barren of hopeful fruit, are heartily pursued; that any thing otherwise averteth us from itself, than as immediately presenting some mischief, or dangerously threatening it. When goodness therefore doth clash with interest or pleasure, human wisdom (the φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, 'natural sense of the flesh,' which St. Paul speaketh of as opposite to virtue) will dispose men to take part with these; and, except some higher aid come in to succor goodness, it is odds that ever they will prevail over it. If it do appear that virtue can pay men well for their pains, they perhaps may be her servants; but they will hardly wait on her in pure courtesy, or work in

her service for nothing; if she bringeth visibly a good dowry with her, she may be courted; but her mere beauty or worth will draw few suitors to her: who will forego sensible pleasures, or wave substantial profit; who will reject the overtures of power or honor, for her sake? And if vice, how ill soever it look or lear, do offer fairly, how many persons will be so nice or squeamish, as merely out of fancy, or in despite to her, to refuse or renounce her? In short, as men are baited with pleasure or bribed with profit, so they pursue, as they are stung with pain or curbed with fear, so they eschew things; it is a gift (or a specious appearance of some good offered) which perpetually moveth the greatest part, which often 'blindeth the eyes and perverteth the heart' of the wisest sort of men.

It is farther to common sense very obvious that this life cannot promise or afford to virtue any rewards apparently so considerable, as in the common judgment of men to overpoise the pains and difficulties required to the procurement and maintenance thereof, (the pains and difficulties to be overgone in mastering stubborn inclinations, in moderating greedy appetites, in restraining violent passions, in encountering frequent and strong temptations, in abstracting our minds and affections from sensible things, in assiduous watching over our thoughts, words, and actions,) together with the manifold inconveniences, crosses, and troubles, which do attend the strict practice of virtue; that likewise here there are not ordinarily any such discouragements affixed to vice, which do much weigh down the pleasures with which it is tempered, and the advantages waiting on it.

As for human laws, made to encourage and requite virtue, or to check and chastise vice, it is also manifest that they do extend to cases in comparison very few; and that even as to particulars which they touch, they are so easily eluded or evaded, that without intrenching on them, at least without incurring their edge, or coming within the verge of their correction, men may be very bad in themselves, extremely injurious to their neighbors, and hugely troublesome to the world; so that such laws hardly can make tolerable citizens, much less thoroughly good men, even in exterior demeanor and dealing.

However, no laws of men can touch internal acts of virtue or vice; they may sometimes bind our hands, or bridle our mouths, or shackle our feet; but they cannot stop our thoughts, they cannot still our passions, they cannot bend or break our inclinations: these things are beyond the reach of their cognisance, of their command, of their compulsion, or their correction: they cannot therefore render men truly good, or hinder them from being bad.

On which and the like considerations it is plain enough that, setting aside the persuasion of a future judgment, all other incentives to virtue and restraints from vice, which either common experience suggesteth or philosophical speculation may devise, are very weak and faint, and cannot reasonably promise considerable effect: the native beauty and intrinsic worth of virtue, or its suitableness to reason and the dignity of our nature; the grace and commendation wtih which it decketh the practisers of it; its goodly, pleasant, and wholesome fruits of manifold conveniences, of health to soul and body, of peace and amity among men, of tranquillity and satisfaction in mind, if they do not reach beyond this transitory life, cannot to the common apprehensions of men appear so considerable, or prove so efficacious, as to engage men closely and constantly to adhere thereto. Neither will the worst of evils innate or accessory to vice, (its essential deformity and turpitude, or its being disagreeable to reason and dishonorable to human nature, together with the distempers, the damages, the disgraces, the disturbances apt to sprout from it,) if no more hereafter is to be feared in consequence thereof, be sufficient to deter or discourage men from it: the peril of death itself (the worst evil which men pretend to inflict, and that which our nature seemeth most to abhor) will not import much toward the diverting indigent, ambitious, or passionate men from the most desperately wicked attempts: it is the observation of Cicero, from which he infer-reth the need of supposing future punishments as the only effectual restraints from such actions; 'That,' saith he, 'there might be in this life some fear laid on wicked men, those ancients did think good, that there should be some punishments appointed in hell for impious persons; because indeed they

understood that, setting these apart, death itself was not to be feared.'*

There have been indeed vented such fine and stately notions as these: that reason simply, however attended, doth challenge obedience to itself; that virtue is abundantly its own reward, and vice a complete punishment to itself; that we should not in our practice be mercenary, regarding what profit or detriment will accrue from it, but should be good absolutely and gratis; that moral goods are the only desirable goods, and moral evils the only evils to be grieved at; that nothing can happen amiss to good men, and whatever their condition is, they are perfectly happy; that nothing can truly benefit ill men, or exempt them from misery: but these and the like notions, frequently occurring in philosophers, as they are, (being rightly understood, or taken in a qualified sense,) supposing religion and a future judgment, evidently reasonable and true; (as also perhaps, even abstracting from that supposition, they may have in them a kind of slim and dusky truth, discernible to one in a thousand, who is very sharpsighted, and looketh most wistly on them; as they may be relished by a few persons of very refined spirit, or of special improvement;) so to the common herd of people, (unto whose inclinations and capacities it is fit that the general rules of practice, and the most effectual inducements thereto, should be squared,) to men immersed in the cares, the toils, and the temptations of the world, they plainly are unsuitable; their grosser conceit cannot apprehend, their more rugged disposition will not admit, such fine notions; they in effect, by the generality of men, have been slighted and exploded, as incongruous to common sense and experience, as the dictates of affectation or simplicity; as the dreams of idle persons, addicted to speculation, and regardless of the world, such as it really doth exist, and will ever persist, while men continue endued with the same natural inclinations and affections: so that from such notions little succor can be expected toward promoting virtue, or restraining vice in the world.

On these considerations the necessity or great usefulness

* Cic. Catil. 4.

of supposing a judgment doth appear; that it being cast into the scales may, to the common understanding of men, evidently render virtue more considerable and eligible than vice; as even in consequential profit and pleasure far surpassing it.

2. Whence manifestly the same supposition is also needful for the welfare of human society; the which, without the practice of justice, fidelity, and other virtues, can hardly subsist; without which practice indeed, a body of men would be worse than a company of wolves or foxes; and vain it were to think that it can any where stand without conscience; and conscience, without fear checking, or hope spurring it on, can be no more than a name: all societies therefore, we may see, have been fain to call in the notion of a future judgment to the aid of justice and support of fidelity; obliging men to bind their testimonies by oaths, and plight their truth by sacraments; implying a dread of that divine judgment to which they solemnly do then appeal and make themselves accountable.

3. But farther, the persuasion concerning a future judgment is, on peculiar accounts, most requisite to the support of religion and defence of piety.

It is certain that no authority, on whatever reason or equity grounded, if it do not present competent encouragements to obedient subjects, if it do not hold forth an armed hand, menacing chastisement to the refractory, will signify any thing, or be able to sustain the respect due to it; that no laws, however in themselves equal or commodious, if a certain account or trial, backed with a dispensation of valuable rewards, and infliction of formidable punishments, be not annexed to them, will obtain any force, so as to be observed or regarded; that no obligation whatever, of duty or gratitude, will prevail on men, if they do not apprehend themselves under a constraint to render an account, so as to be forced either to do reason, or to suffer for not doing it: so it is generally; and so it is even in regard to God, the sovereign King and Governor of the world, as piety doth suppose him: his authority will never be maintained, his laws will never be obeyed, the duties towards him will never be minded, without influence on the hopes and fears of men; they will not yield to him any reverence, they will nowise regard his

commands, if they may not from their respect and obedience expect good benefit, if they dread not a sore vengeance for their rebellion or neglect; nothing to them will seem more fond than to serve him who doth not well requite for the performance, than to revere him, who doth not soundly punish for the neglect of his service.

Forasmuch also as piety doth require duties somewhat high and hard, as much crossing the natural inclinations and desires of men, it peculiarly, for the overruling such aversion, doth need answerably great encouragements to the practice, and determents from the transgression of what it requireth; on which score it may also farther appear that temporal judgments and recompenses here are not sufficient to procure a due obedience to the laws of piety; for how indeed can he, that for the sake of piety doth undergo disgrace, loss, or pain, expect to be satisfied here? What other benefits can he presume on beside those which he doth presently forfeit?

Of this particular God may seem designedly to have set before us a pregnant instance or experiment worthy our consideration: God in a very notorious and affecting manner declared his will and law to the Jews; and to engage them to obedience, he not only recommended it to them as very good in itself, and very convenient for them to observe; but he inforced it with promises of the greatest blessings concerning this life, that men are capable of, if they should obey; and with curses or menaces of the most dismal mischiefs imaginable in reference to this life, in case of disobedience; and that he both could and would in both respects make his word good, he did by miraculous dispensation of signal mercies and judgments most evidently show and assure them: yet what was the effect? it was that, as the psalmist expresseth it, 'They despised the pleasant land—and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord: their heart was not right with God, neither were they steadfast in his covenant: they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:' they did not so value those benefits, they could not so dread those penalties, as in regard to them to persist for any time in a steady obedience; as not easily in despite of them to be drawn into the worst of crimes prohibited to them: the sweetest enjoyment of those good things could not hold

them close to their duty, nor was the saddest smart of those evils able to reclaim them from sin; but even that very people (we may farther observe) having afterward (by sparks of light darted from the prophets, or otherwise) obtained some clearer notions and stronger persuasions concerning a future state, and rewards dispensed therein of higher consideration than any temporal ones here, became thereon very constant and resolute in observance of their law; they proved valiant and fierce in defence thereof; they chose rather to endure the most grievous afflictions than to transgress it; as the history of the Maccabees doth inform us: they, as the Apostle to the Hebrews remarked of them, 'waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens:' they also 'were tortured, not accepting a deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:' this hope it was which then did raise them to so vigorous resolution and so cheerful patience: from the same Apostle we also learn that it was a sense of our being here in a transitory state, and 'having an eye to the recompense of reward' after this life, which did engage the good patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament so readily on all occasions to comply with God's will, and to perform the most difficult commands by him imposed on them: these things they did, not, saith the Apostle, having indeed 'received the promises,' (that is, not having the evangelical promises concerning a future life in so formal and express a manner as we now have, proposed to them,) but yet 'having seen them afar off, and having been persuaded of them, and having embraced them, and having' (in declaration of those perceptions and persuasions) 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.'

The like observation might be made even concerning the Pagans, who, while the persuasions concerning judgments and rewards after this life were retained in common vogue, did live more innocently and virtuously; but after those generally were discarded, so that the satirist could say that 'scarce boys did believe any ghosts, or subterraneous judicatures,'* then did all wickedness mainly prevail and overflow. Comparing which

* Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna——
Vix pueri credunt.—Juv. Sat. ii.

things we may discern, as the weakness of considerations merely regarding this present life, so the force of those which concern a future state, in order to the procuring obedience to God's law; supposing both entertained with the same faith or persuasion of mind: from whence the necessity of that judgment, which we speak of, toward the maintenance of piety doth appear.

But beyond these things, this point is very needful to secure the very foundations of all religion and piety, the existence of God, and his providence over human affairs: the belief of a Deity, according to any tolerable notion thereof, and of a providence over us, apt to engage or encourage us to religious performances, without supposition of a judgment, and of a dispensation according to it of human rewards, cannot be well maintained; the objections assailing them would strike too hard, and pierce too deep, were we not furnished with this good shield to receive and repel them.

To find that of the preacher certified by experience; 'No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that sweareth not.'

To behold virtue grovelling on the ground and trampled on, while vice is mounted on the perch, and sitteth proudly domineering; to view innocence and right sadly groaning under oppression, while fraud and violence do triumph and insult; which sights are obvious in the world, as the preacher observed; 'I saw,' said he, 'under the sun,' the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there:' 'I considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as are oppressed; on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter:' so did Job also take notice, when he said, 'The tabernacles of the robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure:' and the psalmist complained of wicked oppressors; 'They are inclosed in their own fat,' and 'with their mouth they speak proudly:' and the prophet

Malachi; 'Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are delivered.'

To observe it frequently to happen that most innocent and virtuous persons do conflict all their days with hardships and crosses, and sometime after all die sadly in pain and under ignominy; while persons most outrageous in lewdness and iniquity do florish and rant it out in a long undisturbed course of prosperity, and in the end depart hence fairly and quietly; according to that in Ecclesiastes; 'There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in wickedness:' the former was the case of Socrates, of Phocion, of Regulus, of many other remarkably gallant and worthy persons; the latter, as Cicero observed, of Dionysius, who, after thirty years of unjust and cruel domination, in much splendor, died quietly in his bed.*

Thus, I say, to see and consider that commonly 'to just men it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and to wicked men according to the work of the righteous,' as the preacher speaketh, that here piety with its best friends do suffer deeply, and impiety with its worst abettors do notably thrive; yea, that not only good men suffer, but often suffer for being good, (from envy and malignity of men that hate goodness,) and that bad men not only prosper, but prosper by their wickedness, (by their fraud and violence,) hath been a huge scandal to religion, which hath caused many to stumble, hath cast some quite down into the gulf of atheism or epicurism; hath brought some men to doubt, hath induced others flatly to deny, that there is a God, (that is, a most wise, powerful, just, and good Being, every where present,) or that he being, doth preside over, or anywise concern himself in our affairs: from this source did flow all those impious conceits, which Seneca thus expresseth; 'One objecteth to the gods neglect of us;

* Dies deficiat si velim numerare, quibus bonis male evenerit, nec minus si commemorem, quibus improbis optime.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. 3.

Dionysius 30 annos tyrannus fuit opulentissimæ et beatissimæ civitatis—atque in suo lectulo mortuus.—Cic. ib.

another, iniquity; another casts them out beyond his world, and leaves them forlorn, as lazy and dull, without any light, or any work.* From hence it hath been, that in all places and times there have been persons ready to say with those in the Psalms, 'How doth God know?—is there knowlege in the Most High?' 'The Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard it:' 'God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, and will never see it.'

And not only on blind pagans and profane persons, but even on the most pious of God's people these considerations have made impression, extorting from their hearts and mouths expostulations like that of Jeremiah; 'Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?' and that of Job, 'Wherefore doth the wicked live, become old, and are mighty in power? their seed is established in their sight, their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God on them; they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave:' and that, 'Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine own hand, and shine on the counsel of the wicked?' Such questions did this kind of observations draw forth, and it shrewdly tempted them to a dissatisfaction in their pious practice, that they were ready to say with the Psalmist, 'Verily have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency;' or with those in the Prophet; 'It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord?' so that hence, 'their feet were almost gone, and their steps had well nigh slipped' into a distrust of God's wise and just providence; they were moved to suspect that God did not indeed bear that special regard to goodness, and affection to good men, that great hatred of iniquity, and displeasure toward the lovers of it, which religion supposeth, as the main grounds of piety; thus, I say, have men, both good and bad, on such occasions been induced or tempted to doubt concerning those fundamental points; and that not without apparently weighty cause, admitting that all

* Sen. de Benef. vii. 31.

accounts are made up here in this life between God and men; or that there is no reckoning behind, to be adjusted in another world by divine justice and goodness; then indeed that saying, it is 'a reproach to the Deity that bad men do prosper,' and good men suffer, hath a plausible semblance of truth; then he that affirmed, there was no God, and heaven to be a void place, 'proving his assertion hence, that while he thus affirmed, he found himself in a good case,' did argue smartly; then Diagoras from an unpunished perjury collected probably that God did not exist, or did not mind what was done here; for that being, and regarding things, he would not have endured himself to be so affronted, and those under his care so abused; then had Dionysius some reason to justify his sacrilege by his prosperous navigation from committing it; and with fair color Diogenes might say that Harpalus's successful treachery and rapine did *testimonium dicere adversos deos*, bear testimony against the gods, as guilty of injustice or carelessness: these sort of discourses would, I say, on excluding the supposition of future judgment, have some validity or speciousness: and for want of that supposition we may observe the apologies for providence, elaborately composed by some philosophers, to be very lame and unsatisfactory. But supposing a judgment hereafter designed by God, and a proceeding with all men according thereto, all difficulty in these cases vanisheth, all objections have plainly no moment or force: then God's present connivance, or patient indulgence toward wicked men, will signify no more than what most becometh him as God and governor of the world; his most excellent goodness and admirable clemency toward his creatures and subjects; in waiting to be gracious, and providing for their return to a better mind; affording them time and means of reforming their minds and manners, that so they may escape the stroke of final vengeance: so in most cases; and in some also signifying his wise justice, in suffering bad men to proceed forward to an inexcusable pitch of guilt, in order to their more clearly just condemnation and severe punishment hereafter; that being *κατηρτισμένοι εἰς ἀπώλειαν*, 'thoroughly fit,' as St. Paul speaketh, or ripe 'for perdition;' being prepared, as the Prophet Jeremiah expresseth it, or 'sanctified for the slaughter;' being by their present

ease and abused prosperity become fat and fair, they may fall more proper victims to divine severity.

Then also from God's permitting good men to suffer, how smartly soever, nothing can be inferred prejudicial unto divine goodness or justice; since they are thereby made fitter for, and do attain a surer title to, those excellent rewards, which he on such trial and approbation of their virtues doth intend to confer on them; especially considering that afflictions are necessary, both as means of rendering men good, and as occasions of expressing their goodness, that scarce any virtue could subsist or could appear without them.

There could be no such thing as patience, if there were no adversities to be endured; no such thing as contentedness, if there were no wants to be felt; no such thing as industry, if there were no pains to be taken; no such thing as humility, if sensible infirmities and crosses did not prompt us to sober thoughts, and show us what we are. There would be no true wisdom, no clear knowlege of ourselves, or right judgment of things, without experiencing the worst half of things. We should never learn to master our passions, or temper our appetites, or wrest our inclinations to a compliance with reason, if that discipline were away, which the holy Psalmist intimateth, saying, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.' How much we do love God, how submissive we are to God's will, how little we do value these mean things here, we cannot otherwise than by willingly undergoing or patiently bearing afflictions, well express; without it no sure trial of virtue can be, without it no excellent example of goodness had ever been. As therefore it is necessary that good men, even that they may be good, should suffer here; so it is, supposing a future judgment, very just that they should do so, that they may acquire a title to the rewards following it; rewards far outweighing the light afflictions they are put to endure here.

In reference therefore to the present impunity of bad men, and letting iniquity to prevail or to proceed here, that which cured David, Job, and Solomon, may satisfy us; 'going into the sanctuary, and understanding the end of those men;' considering that 'the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction,

and shall be brought out to the day of wrath;' that after all their jollity and pleasure, 'God for all these things will bring them into judgment.' In regard to the righteous being afflicted here, that of St. Paul may suffice, saying of them, 'It is a manifest instance of God's righteous judgment, that they may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they suffer:' that of our Saviour; 'Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and shall reproach you; rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven:' that of Solomon; 'Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God.' In respect to both sorts of men, that of St. Peter will resolve all doubt; 'God knoweth how to deliver the godly out of trials, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.' All scores will be fully quitted by the execution of that sentence pronounced by our Judge himself, 'The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'

This hypothesis doth indeed even to our common sense throughly solve most of those appearances in the course of things here, which otherwise might seem intricate or strange; clearing Providence from all misprisions, and satisfying our minds, so far as is needful, concerning the reasons of most occurrences here. From it we may learn,

That God in this great drama, made up of his providence and our free-will concurrently or interchangeably acting, doth mean, in order to this catastrophe of judgment in the last and chief act, to let men go on playing their parts undisturbedly, according to their inclinations and humors, yet within certain limits, and under the check of his hand, in proper seasons, to prevent confusion of all interposing itself.

That it is not, therefore, fit now by open significations, either of approbation or dislike, often to interrupt the process of human actions; especially considering that the final doom concerning persons is not to be grounded on single passages, or the particular acts of one time, but on the whole body of action passing through the course of each man's part, in the place and time allotted to him; and that he who now acteth laudably may, before all is done, come to faulter; he that now behaveth

himself untowardly may afterward learn to do better, and in the end come off well.

That hence it is not to be wondered that God here should be somewhat reserved in dispensing testimonies of favor to those who at present do seem good, somewhat sparing in declaring wrath toward those who now appear bad; that he should not miraculously pour down golden showers on the heads of the righteous, nor send fire from heaven, as an angry man would have him, on every provocation, to consume sinners.

That this life is not a time of reaping, but of sowing; not of approbation, but of trial; not of triumph, but of combat: this world is not a place of enjoyment, but of work; our condition here is not a state of settlement, but of travel: whence no man should expect more of encouragement, than is needful to support him in this work and way; should look to receive wages before his task is done; to get the prize, before he hath gone through the race; to gather the spoils, before he hath fought out the battle; to enjoy rest, before he is at his journey's end; to be put in full possession of happiness, before his right and title thereto is completely assured: that no man also should presume or please himself on present impunity for his misbehavior or sloth, like those of whom the preacher saith, 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil;' seeing this is the season of mercy and patience, when God commonly doth not farther inflict crosses on us, than may serve to mind us of our duty, or urge us to the performance of it; and seeing the longer vengeance is withheld, the more heavy it will at last fall on us, if we despise the present season of grace, and proceed to the end in impenitence; that present impunity, therefore, is a sore punishment, and correction here a really great favor.

That ordinarily temporal prosperity and adversity, as in comparison to things relating to our future state they are plainly inconsiderable, so they can be no arguments of God's special favor or displeasure; whence it appeareth to be no small rashness to conclude how God stands affected to any person from what befalleth him here, (as those who inferred concerning the Galileans, 'whose blood Pilate mixed with their

sacrifices;' and concerning those Jews, 'on whom the tower in Siloam did fall,' that they were more sinners than others of their nation,) yea, that if we must be interpreting God's mind from these occurrences, it is rather more reasonable to conceive that God disliketh them whom he doth not check, and approveth them whom he chastiseth; whence the prosperity of bad men is rather pitiable than invidious, as that which aggravateth and strengtheneth their wickedness, which accumulateth guilt, which draweth them forward, and plungeth them deeper into perdition; that the adversity of good men is no misery, but a blessing and happiness to them, as exercising and fortifying their virtues, insuring their state, endearing them to God. However,

That God plainly doth mean to vilify these present things, appearing to our sense good or evil, by scattering them abroad with an indifferent hand; so that his friends taste as little good and as much evil as his enemies.

That there is no reason to wonder or to complain that things here do not go on in a course so smooth and straight as they should do; for that vanity and iniquity have their part and time to act on this stage, yea are allowed sometimes a seeming reign; but justice, though at present it seemeth to sleep, or to wink at things, will at length awake, and effectually bestir itself; that right, although here it may be sometime crossed or foiled, yet it can never be quelled or overthrown; it may be suspended, but cannot be suppressed; it may be somewhat eclipsed, but it cannot be quite extinguished, yea infallibly in the end it will triumphantly prevail.

That no good design shall be undertaken, nor any honest labor can be spent in vain; seeing although they chance to find no success, or to yield no fruit here, yet they cannot fail to obtain a happy issue and a plentiful reward hereafter.

That how small soever the difference doth now appear between wise men and fools, or between virtuous and vicious persons, there will be hereafter a vast discrimination made, when in consequence of that upright trial one shall enter into eternal bliss, the other shall fall into an abyss of misery.

That this life is not contemptible, nor all things here utterly vain; seeing that on this life is founded our eternal state;

seeing these occurrences have influence on our eternal joy or woe; seeing all things here will conduce to the illustration of divine mercy or justice. That God is indeed here *Deus absconditus*, as the prophet styleth him, 'a God that hideth himself;' advisedly suffering his goodness and justice to be under a cloud, that at length they may break out more gloriously in that day, when, as St. Paul saith, his δικαιοκρισία, his most righteous dealing (both in governance of all affairs now, and in deciding of all cases then) shall be revealed, and made conspicuous to all the world.

Thus doth it, on many accounts, appear fit and needful that there should be a future judgment; the apprehension thereof being the sharpest spur to virtue, the strongest curb from vice, the surest fence of human society, the safest bulwark of religion, (securing the authority of God, and guarding his providence, together with all his holy attributes, from all batteries, all sinister aspersions, all profane misconstructions;) in short, the most effectual means, if it be heartily embraced, to render men, in their minds and in their enjoyments, sober, just in their dealings toward their neighbor, and in all their life pious toward God; there being indeed no consideration, whereof the mind of man is capable, more apt to beget in him a care and conscience of what he doeth, than this; that after a very short and transitory life all his actions must undergo a strict scrutiny, according to the result whereof he shall be either approved and rewarded, or condemned and punished: whereof any man being thoroughly persuaded, and anywise considering it, he cannot surely but accuse himself of extreme folly and madness, if he doth not provide for that account, and order all his practice with a regard thereto. The which use of this point God by his grace dispose us to make, for the sake of Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

'Now the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXIII.

ACTS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 42.

PRELIMINARY observations on this text: three particulars worthy of consideration couched therein; of which the explanation follows; and afterwards some practical applications.

I. There is a judgment ordained by God, and to be declared to men; that is, concerning persons, and actions performed in this life. The justness and fitness of this has been already shown. Its nature, manner, process, and result are declared in the holy Scripture.

1. It teaches us that God has appointed a determinate time for this judgment, called by signal excellency, *the day*; &c.

2. That in order to this, all the actions of men are with the greatest exactness registered.

3. That for this purpose there shall be effected by divine power and command a general resurrection of all, both *the just and the unjust*.

4. That all persons so raised shall be presented at the bar of our Lord, to undergo their trial.

5. That then and there every thought, every word, every work of men shall be disclosed and discussed; every case considered, &c.

6. That on each man, according to the true quality of his doings, thus detected, examined, and stated, a definitive sentence shall pass, by which he shall be acquitted or condemned.

7. That according to the purport of this sentence, a discri-

mination shall be made, of gracious rewards to one party, and sore punishment to the other: this more fully described.

8. We are also taught that all this shall be transacted in a regular, public, and most solemn manner, in the face of the whole world.

9. That also the judgment shall pass to the full conviction and intire satisfaction of all present; so that each shall confess his lot to be just and equal; &c.

Thus do the holy Pandects of our religion set out the final judgment of all men, and vindicate the honor of God; &c.

II. The next particular is the Judge ordained: *he*, that is, Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

The original right and absolute power of judging doth inseparably pertain to God Almighty, whose creatures, servants, and subjects we are; and consequently to his judgment we stand obnoxious: this enlarged on.

Now that God immediately should administer any judgment is incongruous to his nature and to ours; unsuitable to the manner in which this judgment is declared: this further shown: hence it hath pleased him, in his stead, to constitute one most fit for that employment; his blessed Son, on whom he hath conferred the sovereign regal authority, of which the judicial power is a prime branch; &c.

Indeed that under this notion he was designed to that office, even the ancient prophets declared: this shown. And why it should be so, many reasons may be assigned.

1. It was requisite, as before observed, that the Judge should be visible and audible; such as our Lord, the Son of Man, with his glorified flesh, will be: this enlarged on.

2. It is indeed a good part of that regal office which God, in reward of his obedience, did confer on him; giving him *a power over all flesh, all authority in heaven and earth*; &c.

3. It is an office of too great eminence and dignity to be imparted to any other.

4. He alone hath capacities proper for this judicature; the faculty of searching all hearts, the wisdom to know all matters of fact, and discern the right in all cases, &c.

5. By this designation the glory of God is especially promoted; his most excellent attributes being thereby much illustrated: this fully shown.

6. It was likewise just that to our Lord should be immediately and solemnly consigned a power of rewarding his faithful friends, and of doing himself right on his proud and spiteful enemies.

7. This appointment of Jesus for our Judge is also very conducive to our edification, in exciting us to the practice of our duty; in way of consolation and satisfaction to our soul: this fully shown.

Thus, and to such purposes, is our Lord appointed to be our Judge. The manner of his coming and of his executing this office is also declared in Scripture. He came once into the world in meek humility, to show us our duty: he shall return with dreadful majesty and with a pomp of holy angels, &c. to exact an account thereof: this topic enlarged on.

III. Last particular observed in the text, viz. the objects or the extent of the judgment ordained: whom is our Lord to judge? how many shall they be? It is resolved: all, without exception; expressed by the words *quick and dead*. Various interpretations of these words; but their difficulty is not so great as to force on us any remote interpretation. It is shown that by the *quick* is meant all those who are alive, and, as it were, surprised at our Lord's coming; by the *dead*, all other persons who had deceased, from the beginning to that time.

IV. The doctrinal part of this discourse being gone through, some application of it remains to be made.

1. This doctrine engages us to be very circumspect in all our conversation, and vigilant over our ways; since it is irreversibly decreed that we shall be answerable for every thought, and word, and action: this topic enlarged on.

2. The consideration of it is the most effectual means possible to beget and preserve in us sincerity of conduct, seeing that hereafter our very hearts must be thoroughly sifted, and all our thoughts disclosed.

3. It should render us sober and serious in all our thoughts, opinions, affections, and actions; suppressing all proud conceits, all admiration of transitory things, all vicious excesses, wanton joys, &c.; seeing that the day is at hand when all men will be reduced to a level in these respects, &c.

4. It should engage us carefully to improve all the talents by God's providence and grace committed to us; that is, all the means, advantages, and opportunities of doing good, or serving him: for *to whomsoever much is given, from him much shall be required.*

5. It may induce us to observe strict justice and equity in all our dealings, though we may have the power of doing injury and iniquity safely, with respect to human laws, &c.; since the time approaches when it will be seen that he who injureth another, doth chiefly hurt himself.

6. The consideration of this point is apt also to breed charity in us; charity of all sorts: first, that of imparting freely our goods and contributing our endeavors for the relief of our poor neighbors; which is the test of piety, and will be a strong ground of recompense at the last day: secondly, in forgiving all injuries and discourtesies received from other men, since we shall at that trial need abundance of mercy and favor from God, &c.: thirdly, in restraining us from all undue and rash censure of the persons, actions, and state of our neighbor, whereby we invade our Lord's office, making ourselves judges in his stead, &c.

7. The consideration of this doctrine serves also to support and comfort us against all injuries of this kind; since assuredly at that judgment right will be done to him that so suffereth, and his innocence will be cleared.

8. On the like ground it should preserve us from being deluded and poisoned by the more favorable opinions of men.

9. If we desire to judge reasonably about ourselves, or to know our true state, the only way is to compare our hearts and lives with the law of God, judging ourselves by that rule, according to which he will judge us.

10. The consideration of this point will guard us from infidelity and from impatience in regard to the providential dispensation of affairs here.

11. In fine, there is no consideration able to promise so much efficacy in rousing our passions, or duly ordering and settling them on religious practice: it especially moves those two grand springs of activity, hope and fear, and with them, joy and grief: this topic enlarged on. Conclusion.

From thence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.

SERMON XXXIII.

THE CERTAINTY AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT FROM DIVINE REVELATION.

ACTS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 42.

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained by God to be Judge of quick and dead.

THESE words are part of a sermon preached by St. Peter to Cornelius and his friends, wherein the Apostle briefly declareth unto them the chief particulars in the history of Christ, together with some main points of Christian doctrine most fit for them to know; particularly he doth in these words express the point concerning the future judgment; reporting that our Lord especially did charge his Apostles 'to preach unto the people and testify;' that is, first publicly to declare and explain, then by convenient proofs, especially by divine attestations, to evince and persuade this point; the importance whereof, and eminence among other Christian doctrines, doth hence plainly appear, that the author of our faith did make so especial provision, and gave so express charge concerning the promulgation and probation thereof: the which circumstance is indeed remarkable and weighty; but I shall not insist on it, meaning immediately to set on considering the point itself, as it is here laid down in these terms; 'that it is he which was ordained by God

to be judge of quick and dead:' in which words are couched three particulars most considerable.

1. A judgment ordained by God, and to be declared to men.

2. The Judge, by whom immediately that judgment is administered; he; Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

3. The extent of that judgment or its adequate object; 'quick and dead.'

These particulars I shall in order touch, inserting some material considerations about the nature and manner of this judgment, with some reasons why it should be thus managed; then I shall adjoin some practical applications.

I. There is a judgment ordained by God, and to be declared to men; that is, concerning the persons and actions of men performed in this life. How just and fit it is that there should be such a judgment, how useful and requisite the declaration thereof is on several accounts, (for engaging men on the practice of virtue and restraining them from vice, for the preservation and maintenance of human society, for the support and defence of religion, for the vindication of divine providence, and illustration of all God's holy attributes,) I have already endeavored to declare; and in that regard I shall content myself now to say, that as on the apparent equity and usefulness of this doctrine all nations commonly have ever embraced the general substance thereof, as a fundamental principle of their religion, (all men commonly with a ready inclination having avowed it reasonable to suppose that every man after this life shall be brought unto a just and impartial bar, where his doings shall be exactly scanned, and his person answerably doomed unto a comfortable or afflictive recompense,) so our religion, in a peculiar manner, doth most expressly assert, most clearly describe, and most vigorously inculcate it, with all possible advantage, both for the clearing God's dealings and attributes, and for the excitement of men to a virtuous and pious life. The nature, manner, process, and result of the future judgment are in the holy Scripture most punctually set down.

1. It teacheth us that God hath appointed a determinate time for this judgment. 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness;' that which is called 'the day of judgment,' the last day, the day

of the Lord, the great and the illustrious day; and, by signal excellency, The day; and, That day; intimating, beside the certainty of the thing itself, the most especial regard that men are concerned to bear thereto.

2. That in order to this judgment all the actions of men are with greater exactness registered in books; (the books of divine omniscience, seeing all things present, and retaining all things past, which nothing can escape;) 'The books (it is said in the Revelation) were opened,' and the 'dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works.'

3. That, in order thereto, there shall be (effected by divine power and command) a general resurrection of all persons, both just and unjust: 'The hour,' saith our Lord, 'is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.'

4. That then all persons so raised shall be presented at the bar of our Lord, to answer and undergo their trial; 'I saw,' saith St. John, 'the great and small standing before God's throne;' 'and we must all,' saith St. Paul, 'be made appear, and, 'be set forth at the judgment-seat of Christ;' and 'The Son of man,' saith our Lord, 'shall sit on the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered together before him.'

5. That then and there every thought, every word, every work of men shall be throughly disclosed and discussed; so that it, together with its due quality and desert, shall plainly appear; all the designs and pretences of men shall be laid bare; every case shall be considered; every plea heard and scanned; the merits of every cause weighed in an even balance, according to truth and equity; men's neglects and omissions of duty shall also come under consideration; an account will be exacted of all the talents entrusted to any man, (of the abilities, opportunities, and advantages he ever had of doing God service,) and of what improvements answerable he hath made; what men have done themselves, and what they have done by others, from the influence of their advice, their persuasion, or their example, shall be searched out and poised; 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'will

bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of hearts;' and, 'Of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account at the day of judgment,' saith our Lord; and, 'After a long time,' saith he again, 'the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them,' &c. and, 'Every work,' saith the Preacher, 'God shall bring into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

6. That on each man, according to the true quality of his doings, thus detected, examined, and stated, a definitive sentence shall pass, whereby he shall be acquitted and approved, or condemned and reprobated; τότε ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἑκάστῳ, 'Then,' saith St. Paul, 'praise shall be to each one;' praise, that is, generally, (by an εὐφημισμὸς, or favorable manner of speech,) a due taxation and esteem, according to merit: then, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' and, 'O thou bad and slothful servant,' shall be pronounced to one or the other sort of men, respectively, according to their demeanor here.

7. That according to the purport of this sentence a discrimination shall be made; and to one party a gracious reward, correspondent to the quality and measure of their good works, in a blissful place; to the other, a sore punishment, in proportion to their demerits, in a place of misery: to the one, everlasting joy and glory above in heaven; to the other, endless sorrow and shame beneath in hell, shall be assigned and dispensed effectually. 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works;' he will 'separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left: then the King shall say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'—and, 'Then he shall say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:' and, the good and faithful servant shall 'enter into his Master's joy;' the bad and slothful 'shall be cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth:' so our Lord himself expresseth it: and St. Paul thus; 'We must,' saith he, 'all ap-

pear before the tribunal of God, ἵνα κομίσηται ἕκαστος, that each one may bear away the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad:' and, 'God will render unto every man according to his works: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man that doeth evil:' and even of old the prophet Daniel thus briefly did express this different doom; 'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' Hence in regard to one party is the time of judgment styled the season of refreshment, the day of redemption, the time of recompense; in reference to the other, the day of wrath, the day of destruction, the time of vengeance; when our Lord will, as St. Paul saith, 'take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.'

8. We are also farther taught that all this shall be transacted in a regular, public, and most solemn manner, in open court, in the face and audience of all the world, before angels and men. For our Lord is described coming to judgment with attendance of all the holy angels; and the saints, being themselves first approved, shall become assessors there; and all men are represented as present at the trial, or as spectators and auditors thereof: 'Whosoever,' saith our Lord, 'shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God:' and, 'There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known:' 'whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in closets shall be proclaimed on the house-tops.'

9. That also the judgment shall pass to the full conviction and intire satisfaction of all that are present; so that each one

concerned therein shall be forced in conscience to acquiesce in his doom, as most just and equal; the condemned stooping with awe to his justice; the absolved adoring with humble reverence his mercy; the spectators applauding with admiration his holy wisdom: for that day will be, as St. Paul calleth it, 'a day of revelation of God's righteous judgment;' and God in regard thereto is represented speaking thus: 'To me, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall give glory to God:' and, 'our Lord, in that day,' saith St. Paul, 'will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe:' and, 'He will then,' as it is in St. Jude, 'convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' So that thereon those confessions and acclamations of praise in the Revelation shall be resounded through heaven; '*Alleluia*; Salvation, and glory, and power, be to the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments:' 'Salvation be unto our Lord, that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb:' 'Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints.'

Thus do the holy Pandects of our religion set out that judgment, which all men hereafter must undergo; wherein all the attributes of God shall be conspicuously glorified; his wonderful clemency shall be sweetly displayed, his exact justice shall be terribly demonstrated, his perfect wisdom shall be clearly unfolded; wherein the knotty intrigues of providence shall be loosed, and the mysterious depths of the divine counsels shall be laid open; and God's honor, which now by the bold and rash judgments of men is often attacked, shall be thoroughly cleared and repaired, to the joyful satisfaction of all pious men, and sad confusion of the impious; wherein the great wisdom of those, who before all things choose to be good and to serve God, and the extreme folly of those who scorn or neglect piety, shall be most evidently apparent; wherein, finally, all scores that now so undiscernibly run on shall be exactly quitted and even; impartial right shall be done; every man shall have his due assigned and rendered to him.

But let so much suffice concerning the judgment appointed: we proceed to the next particular, the Judge ordained; *he;* that is, Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

II. The original right and absolute power of judging doth inseparably pertain to God Almighty, whose creatures, whose servants, whose subjects we are, and consequently to whose judgment we stand obnoxious; as he is naturally the Sovereign Lord and King of the world, so he is, as the Apostle calleth him, κριτὴς πάντων, the Judge of all persons and things; and particularly Judge of all the earth, or of all men, as Abraham did style him; as on the grounds specified we do owe obedience to the laws he prescribeth us, performance of the service he allotteth us, and improvement of the talents he committeth to us; so we do thence stand obliged to render an account to him of our correspondent behavior, and due management in those respects, and are liable to the judgment he shall make thereof: all judgment therefore must be exercised either immediately by God himself, or in subordination to him; in his name and right, and by virtue of authority derived from him; otherwise that of St. Paul, 'Who art thou that judgest another's servant,' might be alleged against any, who, without license or commission from him, should presume to judge us.

Now that immediately God should administer any judgment is incongruous to his nature and to ours; it is particularly unsuitable to the manner of this judgment, which God designeth to be such as may pass openly before all the world, to the conspicuous declaration of his glorious justice and mercy, to the clear satisfaction and conviction of all persons interested therein: which, that it might be, 'it was fit,' as St. Austin saith, 'that they who were to be judged should see their judge;' it is fit that the assistants, and spectators, or witnesses thereof, should discern the process: but the glorious and dreadful presence of God cannot be discernible by us, or would not be supportable; 'He,' saith St. Paul, 'inhabiteth inaccessible light, so that no man hath seen, or can see him:' and, 'Thou canst not see my face,' saith he to Moses; 'for there shall no man see me, and live:' that majesty, before which the purest seraphims, being dazzled with its infinite brightness, are constrained to veil their faces; that presence, of which the Prophet saith, 'The moun-

tains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt in his presence; yea, the world, and all that dwell therein;' how should frail and impure flesh sustain? how should guilty sinners appear before him? 'Who may stand in his sight when he is angry!' when he is angry, 'at whose wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation;' What ear of mortal man could endure that voice 'at which the earth melteth;' that 'reproof, at which the pillars of heaven are astonished?' It being therefore from the divine excellency impossible or inconvenient that God himself, immediately as such, should exercise judgment; it hath pleased him, in his stead, to constitute one most fit for that employment: as he for particular temporal judgments here hath appointed princes and governors visibly to manage them as his ministers and vicegerents in his name and behalf; so that universal and ultimate judgment he hath (for his own greater glory and our special benefit) committed unto his beloved Son Jesus, our blessed Mediator and Saviour; the same who, with most admirable condescension of grace and charity, did once come hither in our nature to rescue us from sin and misery; who underwent so many crosses and troubles for us; who freely laid down his life to redeem and save us; he it is, who is ὡρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ κριτὴς, decreed and determined by God (or under him, as his substitute and deputy) to be our judge: so in our text; and so again St. Paul; 'God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness,' ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισεν, by the man, or in the man, whom he hath ordained; whence it is called 'the judgment-seat of Christ, before which we must appear:' and, 'The Father,' saith our Lord himself, 'judgeth no man, (that is, immediately and separately,) but hath given all judgment to the Son:' and, 'The Father,' he addeth, 'hath given to the Son the authority, and to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man;' that is, God hath conferred on him the sovereign regal authority, and hath particularly committed to him that prime branch thereof, judicial power; 'even as he is the Son of man:' so that as in our nature he performed all that was requisite to save us, as in our nature he was exalted to God's right hand to rule and bless us; so for consummation of all done in our regard, he shall in our nature appear

to judge us; awarding to us the rewards he purchased for us, or punishments for the contempt of his favors.

And, indeed, that he under this name and notion was designed to this office, even the ancient Prophets did foreshow: for it was 'one like the Son of man,' whom Daniel 'did behold coming with the clouds of heaven,' having all royal dominion and power given unto him; and it was, according to Isaiah's predictions, the 'Son, born and given unto us, on whose shoulder the government should be,' and to whom the kingdom should be assigned, 'to order it, and establish it, with judgment and justice for ever.'

The point then is manifest, that our Saviour Jesus, by designment and deputation from God, is invested with this eminent office and power. And why it should be so, many reasons, many fair congruities, may be assigned.

1. It was requisite (as we before touched) that the judge should be visible, and audible; such whom the parties concerned might (without extreme surprise and amazement) discern and converse with, in order to their clearer and fuller satisfaction, or conviction: such our Lord, the Son of man, clothed with glorified flesh, will be; his mild and sweet, though bright and stately aspect, all men in some manner may be capable of seeing; his calm and clear voice all men may hear: him the just may with cheerful satisfaction behold smiling on them with gracious kindness; and the wicked also with sad confusion may view frowning toward them with just disdain: those with comfortable joy may hear him acquitting, commending, and blessing them; these with due regret also may hear him convincing, reproving, and denouncing the fatal curse on them: so that hereon the former, with humble thankfulness, shall willingly acknowlege and praise his grace; the latter, with shameful horror, constrainedly shall confess their guilt before him: 'Behold,' saith St. John, with an emphatical regard it seems to this consideration, 'he cometh in the clouds; and every eye shall see him, even they who pierced him:' and, 'They,' saith our Lord himself, 'shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory:' and our Lord is represented in judgment speaking and arguing the case with all parties concerned, receiving their plea, and

expressing his mind to them: this is a kind of natural capacity qualifying him for this employment; but there are considerations of a higher nature peculiarly fitting him for it.

2. It was indeed a good part of that regal office, which God, in reward of his obedience, and to declare his acceptance thereof, did confer on him; giving him a power over all flesh, all authority in heaven and earth; whence it is by St. Paul called 'his kingdom;' 'I charge thee,' saith he to Timothy, 'before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom:' he being then our King, and as such the fountain of all justice, must either himself in person, or by some delegate, administer it; but that he should immediately do it, divers special reasons do suggest themselves.

3. It is an office of too great eminence and dignity to be imparted to any other: he alone who subsists in union with God, who is the Son of God, who hath most highly pleased God, who hath merited a sovereignty over us, and a supreme eminency above all creatures, is capable of the honor to determine those points of the highest importance concerning the final doom of God's creatures, and the salvation of those souls whom he hath purchased; 'Worthy is he alone to receive the book, (of judgment,) and to open the seals thereof; because he was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood:' 'Worthy is the Lamb (worthy exclusively and solely) that was slain to receive the power and honor, the glory and blessing,' annexed to this high office.

As there is nothing more apt to beget in us veneration toward him, than considering that he shall be our judge, on whose sentence our fate and felicity must depend; so it is therefore most fit that it incommunicably and solely should belong to him; especially seeing God with especial regard to his honor did assign the judicial office to him: the Father, it is said, 'hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men might honor the Son, as they do the Father.'

4. He alone also hath capacities proper for this judicature: he only hath that divine faculty of searching men's hearts; he only is furnished with wisdom to know all matters of fact that ever were, and to discern the right in every case; he above all,

being absolutely good, is endued with perfect equity of mind, and immutable love of right, always disposing him to judge most justly; he alone can have in him that μετριοπάθεια, or exact temperament of affection toward men, which is requisite to the distribution of equal justice toward them, according to due measures of mercy and severity; the highest angel in heaven were incapable so rightly to distinguish the strict bounds of these things. Wherefore in regard to these dispositions peculiar to him, we are even by the ancient Prophets informed that this office is allotted to him; 'The spirit of the Lord,' saith Isaiah, 'shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom—and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:' and, 'A bruised reed' (saith God in the same Prophet, intimating his incomparable sagacity, equity, and temper, as it were, for this purpose) 'shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth:' and, 'Thou,' saith the Psalmist concerning him, 'lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'

5. By this designation the glory of God is especially promoted, his most excellent attributes being much illustrated thereby: his wisdom appeareth in constituting one so in all respects most fit to discharge the office, and his goodness most clearly shines therein: for since it was requisite that a judgment should pass on us, how could the terror thereof be better allayed than by putting it into the hands of his Son? to whose cognisance, were the choice permitted to us, should we rather submit our actions, than to his? to whom rather should we freely commit all our life and welfare than to him, who by nature is so nearly allied to us, and hath not disdained to call us brethren? who in disposition of spirit is so meek and lowly, so merciful and compassionate? who here was visibly in disposition and demeanor a lamb, and is represented to us continuing such; than to him, who by so many signal experiments hath expressed an excess of kindness towards us, and tenderness of our welfare; who hath conspicuously evidenced himself to

be the best friend to mankind; that he ardently desireth the salvation of all men, even of his worst enemies; for whom he willingly did spend his blood, for whom he dying earnestly prayed; whom he continually wooeth to reconciliation and repentance, and consequently to the enjoyment of greatest happiness? How then could God more plainly express his goodness toward us than in assigning such a Judge for us?

How also could he exhibit a more illustrious instance of his justice and love to righteousness, than in advancing him to so glorious an office, who out of perfect compliance to his will did freely stoop so low, and gladly undergo so much? Worthy of God it was, and a congruous retribution, to place the crown on his head, to put the sceptre into his hand, who willingly bore a cross, who patiently submitted to a scourge; to constitute him the Judge, who out of abundant piety to God and charity to God's creature, was contented to be arraigned, to be sentenced, to be executed as a malefactor: he dearly purchased the right to be 'Lord of dead and living,' and just it was that in effect he should obtain it.

6. Just it likewise was that to him, immediately and solemnly, should be consigned a power to acknowlege and reward his faithful friends and servants; those who had believed his word, had observed his laws, had out of love and respect done much and suffered much for him.

Just also it was that he should be empowered to do himself right on his proud and spiteful enemies; that he should see them lying under his feet and at his disposal, who had so scornfully insulted on him, and so cruelly misused him; that he righteously should judge them, who so maliciously had accused and so injuriously condemned him; should chastise them severely, who most unmercifully had afflicted and slaughtered him; should worthily reprobate all those who had unworthily rejected him: in fine, that he should render a due recompense to all wicked persons, who by distrusting his word, by despising his overtures of grace and mercy, by resisting his will and rejecting his authority, by trampling on his holy doctrine and laws, had wronged, had dishonored, had disclaimed him.

7. This appointment of Jesus for our Judge is farther very conducible to our edification, in way of excitement to the prac-

tice of our duty, and encouragement thereto; in way of consolation and satisfaction to our soul.

It considered is apt to raise in us a high reverence and dread of our Saviour; and consequently to dispose us to the observance of his laws, and imitation of his example.

It is matter of special comfort and encouragement to consider that hence assuredly we shall find a fair and favorable trial; since it is no enemy, not one disaffected, yea, not one indifferently affected toward us, who shall judge us, but our best friend; from whom we may expect not only justice and equity, but all the favor and kindness our cause will bear.

It also duly pondered is most proper to work in us an earnest care and fear of sinning, and thereby of becoming obnoxious to condemnation: for what an aggravation will it yield to our whether foolish perverseness or slothful negligence; how extreme disingenuity, how wretched ingratitude will it argue in us, to be cast and condemned by such a judge; a judge so fair and equal, so mild and gentle, so benign and favorable to us; so willing to acquit us, so desirous to save us. With what face, think we, having transgressed his most good and righteous laws, having rejected all his gracious tenders of mercy and favor, having defeated all his most serious purposes, and frustrated his most painful endeavors for our welfare; having violated our manifold obligations and engagements to him; having abused his so unexpressible great love and goodwill toward us; having hence deplorably forfeited all his favor, and incurred his most grievous displeasure; with what face, I say, having done all this, shall we appear in his presence? how then shall we bear the frowns of his tender love changed into fierce disdain, of highest patience turned into extreme fury, of so terrible a majesty provoked by so heinous affronts? with what heart shall we hear that once most sweet and charming voice, which in so pleasant and affectionate a strain did sound forth words of peace and comfort in our ears; that so kindly invited us to reconciliation, so meekly sued us to a compliance with him, so liberally offered to us the best things in the world on so gentle terms, now only uttering toward us bitter complaints and sore rebukes; thundering forth words of indignation and terror, denouncing most horrible menaces and curses on us.

Thus, and to such purposes, is Jesus our Lord appointed to be our Judge: I shall only farther touch the manner of his exercising and executing this office, or the way of his address and proceeding thereto; the which in holy Scripture (for the begeting in us a regard, veneration, and awe suitable thereto) is described to be with greatest glory, state, and solemnity. Our Lord came once in a meek humility to show us our duty, but he shall come again with a dreadful majesty to exact an account thereof; taking his progress from the highest heavens in most royal magnificent equipage, attended on with a numerous, or with a numberless and most pompous train of angels, ('with all the holy angels,' it is expressly said,) accompanied with triumphal shouts and acclamations; 'a trumpet of God,' (that is, a wonderfully and unconceivably sonorous trumpet, blown, as it were, by the mouth of God,) and 'the voice of an archangel' resounding before him an universal summons, with a noise so loud and piercing, as shall immediately, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shake all the earth, and rouse all the dead out of their mortal slumber; the irresistible breath of that all-powerful voice wafting them, together with all surviving people, through the clouds into the presence of their Judge, conspicuously seated in most glorious state on his royal tribunal.

'This same Jesus,' said the two angels to the Apostles, expressing this matter in the most simple and plain manner, 'shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven:' a cloud took him up from their eyes then, and the clouds, as they imply, should restore him to their sight; for, 'Behold,' saith St. John, 'he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him:' and, 'They shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven in power and great glory;' and, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory,' saith our Lord himself somewhat more explicitly: but St. Paul with most punctuality describeth the manner of his appearance; 'The Lord,' saith he, 'shall descend from heaven with a shout,' (ἐν κελεύσματι, with an exciting or commanding summons,) 'with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we, which are alive

and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' In such manner, to the purpose of exciting due respect and dread within us, is our Lord represented at the end of the world to come down from heaven, for the exercising this judgment.

III. I proceed to the last particular observed in the text, which is the objects, or the extent of the judgment ordained: whom is our Lord ordained to judge? how many shall they be? It is resolved; all, without exception; expressed here by the words 'quick and dead:' and otherwhere by St. Paul: 'I charge thee,' saith he to Timothy, 'before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom:' and by St. Peter likewise; 'Who,' saith he, concerning profane men, 'shall render an account to him that is ready to judge both the quick and dead:' which places evidently do confirm the truth of the proposition, that all men are obnoxious and shall be subjected to this judgment; but yet so that the words themselves, 'quick and dead,' may seem to need some explication; for it being a common law, to which all men by nature, such as it now stands, after the curse, are subject to undergo death; for thence it is, as the Apostle saith, 'appointed for men once to die, and after death judgment;' and, 'What man is he,' saith the psalmist, 'that shall not see death?' and that being so, why should not the dead comprehend all that are to be judged? accordingly as we see it expressed in the Revelation; 'I saw the dead, great and small, standing before God—and the dead were judged for the things written in the books, according to their works.' The dead were judged; no mention is made of the living: wherefore, to evade this objection, some have interpreted the dead and living, not for a distinction of persons, but of parts in men; of the living souls and dead bodies of men: others have taken the words as signifying metaphorically the living, that is, righteous men, say they, or persons endued with a spiritual life; and the dead, that is, persons 'dead in trespasses and sins,' or void of spiritual sense and activity. But the difficulty is not so mighty as to force us on so remote and absonous interpretations, St. Paul having plainly enough showed us how to under-

stand his words, and how to solve the knot propounded; that by the living are to be understood those who shall be found, as it were surprised, alive at our Lord's coming; by the dead, all other persons, who, from the beginning before that time, had deceased, and should be raised up at the sound of the last trump; 'This we say to you,' saith he to the Thessalonians, 'in the word of the Lord, that we which live, remaining at the presence of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.' Our Lord is therefore supposed by the Apostle to find some alive at his coming; wherefore that which is affirmed concerning all men being appointed to taste death, (being otherwise, as the instances of Enoch and Elias show, liable to exception,) is to be understood, by a synecdoche, very ordinary in such cases, for the incomparably greater part of men; for all indeed, but one generation; or with this abatement, all but those whose death shall be prevented by our Lord's appearance; (the which is set out as very sudden and unexpected, like the coming of a thief in the night;) even those men also being in nature and condition mortal like others, although accidentally thus escaping the actual stroke of death. Neither shall even those persons be so exempted from death, but that they must undergo somewhat equivalent thereto; a change, which shall render them alike prepared for judgment with those who had undergone death; for, 'Behold,' saith St. Paul again to the Corinthians, 'I tell you a mystery; We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye:' which words alone do with sufficient evidence declare the meaning of this distinction between quick and dead. The sum is, that all persons, none excepted, of what condition or quality, what nation or time, what sex or what age soever, shall be exposed to the judgment; high and low, rich and poor, wise and simple, learned and ignorant, good and bad; the mightiest princes and lords, no less than the meanest subjects and slaves; the subtlest statesmen and deepest scholars, no less than the silliest idiots: in a word, must universally all without any distinction, any privilege, any acceptance of persons, all and every one must certainly appear at this bar, must undergo this trial, must here receive their sentence and doom, must undergo reward or punishment accordingly.

IV. The doctrinal part I have thus gone through of this grand point; it remaineth to make some application thereof. The considering it is indeed most necessary, and exceedingly profitable in many respects: there is no kind of virtue or good practice, which the serious consideration thereof is not apt to produce; no good affection, which it may not serve to excite; no good duty to which it doth not powerfully engage us: there is likewise no ill passion which it may not help to quell or repress; no bad design or action, which it may not effectually deter or discourage us from. Of so many particular uses I shall only touch those which are most obvious; especially those unto which the Scripture doth expressly apply the consideration thereof.

1. It greatly doth engage us to be very circumspect in all our conversation, and vigilant over our ways; for since by irreversible decree it is appointed that we must render an account of every thought arising in our mind, (at least of those which find harbor and entertainment there;) of every word that passeth through our mouth; of every action which we do undertake; what exceeding reason have we, with most attentive and accurate regard, to mind whatever we do? Since it is certain that for all these things we shall be judged, but uncertain to us when we shall be called thereto; how watchful are we concerned to be, that we be not surprised, and found unready to yield a good account: how observant in all reason should we be of our Lord's admonition in the gospel; 'Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh:' how affected should we be with that warning, or menace, in the Revelation; 'If thou dost not watch, I shall come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I come on thee!' It may be, as we see intimated, the next day, for all we can know, or the next hour, when death seizing on us shall carry us into that prison or place of durance, where we shall be detained until the time of our being presented at the bar; and what an unexpressible misery then will it be, to be found unprepared for the trial, and unable to render a good account! If we be quite asleep, in a total neglect of our duty; or if we be drowsy, in a careless and sluggish performance thereof; or if our senses rest amused on other cares and busi-

nesses impertinent to this account; in what an extreme danger do we abide! as our Saviour again doth warn, advising thus; 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come on you unawares.' You know what the fortune was of the foolish virgins, whose lamps were gone out for want of oil; that is, whose souls were destitute of true goodness, and whose lives consequently did not shine with good works; how, being surprised in that case by the Bridegroom's coming, they were unfit to meet him, they were excluded from his favor, they were rejected with an, 'I know you not.' The like fate you know of that bad servant, who 'saying in his heart, My Lord delayeth to come,' (that is, not believing, or not considering his state in relation to the future judgment,) 'began to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;' (that is, did live in the practice of injustice, uncharitableness, and intemperance;) his fate shall be this; 'The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites:' the same, if we do live in gross neglect, or in heinous violation of our duty, will be our doom. 'Let therefore' (as our Lord again doth enjoin and inculcate) 'our loins be girded about, and our lamps burning; and we ourselves like men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh, we may open unto him immediately.' 'Let us,' as St. Peter exhorteth, 'gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that (in case of our faithful and constant obedience) shall be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' In fine, considering these things, 'what manner of persons then ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of our Lord?' as that great Apostle doth again admonish and argue.

2. The consideration of this point is the most effectual means possible to beget and preserve sincerity in us; disposing us to live simply, without dissimulation or deceit, speaking as we think, doing what we profess, performing what we promise, being as we seem; for, seeing our hearts must be thoroughly

searched and sifted; since our most retired thoughts must be disclosed; since our most secret designs and our desires must come to light, and be exposed to the public view of angels and men; since the day approacheth, when (all vizards being taken off, all varnish of pretence being wiped away) every person shall appear stark naked in his own true shape and colors; every thing shall seem what it really is, divested of false glosses, what profit can it be now to dissemble, to conceal, or to disguise our thoughts or doings? To what purpose doth it serve to palliate our ambitious or covetous intents with specious garbs of zeal or conscience? What comfort can we find in driving on our self-interests, or satisfying our private resentments, in disturbing the peace of mankind, or fomenting stirs and factions in the world under such masks? What a folly is it to delude men with false appearances, or rather by them to abuse themselves; seeing they soon will be rightly informed, and we grievously disgraced for it? What other satisfaction indeed can we have, than in real goodness and pure integrity in heart and life; whereby we may now approve our consciences unto God, and shall afterward by his unquestionable judgment be approved to all the world? our true wisdom is to be εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι, as St. Paul speaketh; that is, 'simple and inoffensive toward the day of Christ;' that is, without any indirect regard or design, conscionably to perform our duty toward God and man, in order to the rendering a good account at the last judgment; our best comfort will prove that of St. Paul—'the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.'

3. The consideration of this point should render us very sober and serious in all our thoughts, our opinions, our affections, our actions; suppressing all proud and haughty conceits, all admiration of these transitory things, all vicious excesses, all vain curiosities, all wanton joys and satisfactions: for,

Why should any apprehension of worldly state, of wealth, of honor, of wit, of any natural or acquired endowment, puff up our minds, seeing the day is near at hand, which in these regards will quite level men, and set them all on even ground before an impartial bar, where no such things shall be had in

any consideration or regard; when all secular and external advantages being laid aside, the moral qualities of men only shall be taxed and estimated; a day wherein all these admired vanities shall vanish into nothing; all our empty tumors shall be depressed; all the fond arrogance of man shall be confounded; so that the proud and profane ones of the world shall be constrained to say after the wise man, 'What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away as a shadow, and as a post that hasted by.'

And why should we much value those splendid toys, or that sordid trash, which men here do so eagerly scrape and scramble and scuffle for; which then evidently will be discountenanced, will at least appear worthless and unprofitable to us? what indeed in this world, supposing this judgment, being truly rated, can seem great, or worthy to affect us?

And why, having affairs on foot of so immensely vast importance, should we amuse ourselves with trivial matters, impertinent at least, if not prejudicial to our main accounts?

And how shall we dare to embrace the serpent of sinful excess, considering, beside the poison in its body, what a dreadful sting it carrieth in the tail thereof; how these flashes of pleasure do kindle a flame, that will scorch us to eternity? One thought of judgment mixed with any brutish enjoyments were enough, one would think, to allay their sweetness, to render them indeed not only insipid, but distasteful and bitter to us.

And how can we be easily transported into wild merriments, suffering our minds to be ruffled, and the tone of our reason to be slackened by them, if we consider how infinitely serious business lieth on us; what a dismal hazard we stand in, how nearly our everlasting welfare lieth at stake? If here in this world we were bound in few days to undergo a trial concerning our life, all our estate, and all our reputation, we should deem it seasonable to be somewhat intent, to be indeed very solicitous about what we should plead, and how we should get off; rather than to be lightly sporting at, and loosening our minds in little pleasant humors; much more rather than to be loosing our minds, and banishing all sober thoughts away in exorbitant frolics: extremely wild or stupid would he seem, who in such

a case should so behave himself: it is plainly the case of us all, in a degree infinitely more high than we can suppose any other to be: wherefore reflecting thereon should, methinks, quash all extravagant and dissolute mirth, apt to beat out of our minds and hearts the care of our souls; should compose our minds into a very serious frame; should presently drive us into, and constantly hold us in, a sober sadness of heart; it is a duty which both in wisdom and piety we do owe to this great matter, ('the terror of the Lord,' as St. Paul calleth it,) to fear and dread it: with which disposition of spirit excessive transports of carnal joy are scarce consistent: however let us hear (let us, I say, whose spirits are high, and fancies strong, hear) what the great observer of the world, the Preacher, doth admonish; 'Rejoice,' saith he, 'O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.'

4. The consideration of this point should engage us carefully to improve all the talents by God's providence and grace committed to us; that is, all the means and abilities, all the advantages and opportunities afforded us of doing good, or serving God. Hath God bestowed wealth on us? this will engage us so to use it, as not therewith to cherish our pride, or pamper our luxury, not merely to gratify our pleasure or humor; but to expend it in succoring our indigent neighbor, or otherwise promoting God's service. Hath God invested us with power? this should induce us to use it moderately and fruitfully; not therewith to domineer or insult over our brethren, not anywise to wrong or misuse them; but to yield protection, aid, and comfort to them; to afford patronage and succor to right; to minister encouragement, support, and defence to virtue; 'remembering that we have also a Lord in heaven,' and a judge, to whom we must be accountable. Hath God vouchsafed us any parts, any wit, any knowlege? this should move us to employ them, not so much in contriving projects to advance our own petty interests, or in procuring vain commendation to ourselves, as in setting forth God's praise, in recommending goodness, in drawing men with the most advantage we can to the practice of virtue and piety. Hath God conferred on us

any thing of honor or credit among men? this may oblige us not to build high conceits on it, or to find vain complacences therein; but to use it as an instrument of bringing honor to God, of ministering aid or countenance to the interests of piety: to those purposes, I say, this consideration greatly serveth; for that it is plainly declared that we are but stewards of these things, having received them in trust, not to use them according to our pleasure, but to employ them with the best advantage for God's service; and accordingly shall in the last judgment be strictly accountable for them; so that if we have embezzled or perverted them to abuse, it will then appear far worse for us, than if we never had received them; much better indeed it will be for us, that we had been poorest beggars, silliest idiots, most despicable wretches here, than not to have duly improved our wealth, parts, and honor to God's service; 'To whomsoever much is given, from him much shall be required,' is the rule that punctually in that great audit will be observed.

5. The consideration of this point may induce us to the observing strict justice and equity in all our dealings: there are in this world many advantages of doing injury and iniquity safely in respect to men; without intrenching on human laws, without incurring any check, or any correction from them; they reach to very few cases, they retrench only some great outrages, and punish some enormous crimes, apparently noxious to the peace or welfare of common society; the stroke of human law may also (even where it taketh cognisance, where it maketh provision to secure right, or repair wrong) often be evaded by power, or eluded by sleight, by gift, by favor: but as the divine law doth extend universally to the prohibition of all iniquity whatever, (small as well as great, secret no less than visible,) so the divine judgment inevitably will reach to all: the least wrongful word, by which we hurt the good name of our neighbor, the least exaction or hard dealing with him, the least overreaching him by craft, (however blameless these things may seem here, however they may pass with commendation, as instances of wit or ability,) will surely then be condemned and punished; 'Let no man,' saith St. Paul, 'go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter διότι ἔκδικος ὁ Κύριος περὶ πάντων τοιούτων, because God will judge and avenge

for all these things;' so that, as the same Apostle teacheth us, 'the unjust, the wrongful, the revilers, the rapacious, shall not inherit the kingdom of God;' that day will detect all wicked fraud and cozenage, will defeat all unjust might and oppression; no power shall be able to break through, no wit shall skill to decline, no friendship or favor will help to keep off the impartial sentence and the irresistible stroke of that judgment; 'There is no darkness or shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves' from being detected, from being prosecuted and punished. The poor, the meek, the simple, who rather choose to suffer than do wrong, shall there find a certain patronage and a full redress; that strict abstinence from wrong, which here may pass for simplicity, shall then be approved for the best wisdom; and this overreaching craft, which now men are so conceited of, will then appear wretched folly, when all ill-gotten profits with shameful regret shall in effect be refunded, yea shall bring grievous damages and sore penalties for them: in fine, then it will be most evident that he who injureth another doth indeed chiefly hurt himself; he that cheateth his neighbor doth really gull himself, and abuse his own soul.

6. The consideration of this point is apt to breed charity in us; charity of all sorts; charity in giving, charity in forgiving, charity in judging and censuring of men.

1. It should incline us freely to impart our goods, and to contribute our endeavors, for the relief of our poor neighbor; for that the last judgment will in especial manner proceed on a regard to the performance or the neglect of this duty: it shall be the test of piety, and a ground of recompense at the last day: to charitable persons, who had relieved him in his poor brethren and members, our Lord himself telleth us that he will say, 'Because I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me; therefore, Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,' To them, who contrarily had neglected to succor and comfort their poor brethren, he will pronounce the contrary doom; 'Depart from me, ye

cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c. And what argument can there be imagined more forcible to engage us on the practice of this duty?

2. It should likewise dispose us readily to forgive all injuries and discourtesies received from any man: for since we shall at that trial need abundance of favor and mercy from God, we should in all reason and duty be willing to show the like to others for God's sake and at his command; especially since he hath appointed the doing so for an indispensable condition, without which we shall not receive mercy or pardon from him; so that infallibly, if we will be rigorous and hard to others in this case, we must expect the like extremity and severity from God: for the laws and rules of God's proceeding then are these; 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy;' 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will God forgive you your trespasses:' and by a lively example, in way of history or parable, our Lord in the gospel hath expressed what words (in case of our refusing to remit to our neighbor his debts and trespasses against us) we shall hear, what usage we shall find at that day; 'O thou wicked servant, (will God say to any such unmerciful person of us,) I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And the Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.'

3. It likewise serveth to restrain us from all undue, all rash and harsh censure concerning the persons, the actions, the state of our neighbor; whereby we do invade our Lord's office, making ourselves judges in his room; whereby we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects; whereby we arrogate to ourselves his attributes, who alone is able to know and judge rightly; 'Why,' saith St. Paul, 'dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand at the judgment seat of Christ;' it is the office of Christ, which we must not encroach on: and, 'Who art thou (doth he again expostulate) that judgest another's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.' We wrong

our Lord in assuming authority over his servants; we wrong our brethren in making ourselves their masters: and, 'Judge nothing before the time,' saith the same Apostle, 'until the Lord come, who shall enlighten the hidden things of darkness, and manifest the counsels of hearts.' We blind wretches in effect do make ourselves gods, and sacrilegiously assert his incommunicable perfections to ourselves, when we presume to search the hearts, or pretend to know the secret intentions of our brethren. Again, 'There is,' saith another Apostle, 'one lawgiver, who can save or destroy: who art thou that judgest another?' that is, how intolerably rash, unjust, and arrogant art thou, who seatest thyself on God's tribunal, and thence dost adventure to pronounce doom on his people? Did we indeed well consider this judgment, we should rather think it advisable to be mindful of our own case, than to pass sentence on that of others; observing how liable ourselves are, we should scarce have the heart to carp at others; finding what great need our actions will then have of favorable interpretation, we should surely be more candid and mild in censuring other men's actions; especially considering that by harsh judgment of others we make our own case worse, and inflame our reckoning; we directly thence incur guilt, we aggravate our own offences, and render ourselves inexcusable; we expose ourselves on that score to condemnation; for, 'With what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again,' our Lord doth say: and, 'Inexcusable,' saith St. Paul, 'thou art, O man, whoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself?' and, μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων, 'Do not,' saith St. James, 'grudge (or make moanful complaint) against one another, lest you be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the doors.'

7. It serveth also to support and comfort us, as against all other wrongful dealing, so against injuries of this kind; against all unjust and uncharitable censures, groundless slanders and surmises, undeserved scorns and reproaches of men; for that assuredly at that judgment right will be done to him that suffereth in this kind; his innocence will be cleared, his good name will be vindicated and repaired; 'God will bring forth his

righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday;' whence approving his conscience to God in well-doing, he may cheerfully say with St. Paul, 'With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment:' 'If our heart do not condemn us,' we may (whatever the opinions or discourses of man be concerning us) have a cheerful boldness and comfortable hope in regard to God: the obloquy of men is a part of that cross which every good man here is appointed to bear, and assuredly shall meet with; for the devil and the world do nothing, if they cannot by impudent assaults dash, or by malicious suggestions blast the practice of goodness: but this consideration may easily raise us to bear it with patience, or with resolution to surmount it; it thence appearing that it nowise can harm us; for if God is our judge, what can the fancies or the tattles of men concern us; 'I will not fear the judgment of men, who shall have God for my judge,' was with good reason said by St. Jerome.

8. It on the like ground should preserve us from being deluded and poisoned by the more favorable opinions of men. There are visibly two great rocks, on which frequently men do split, and make shipwreck of good conscience; compliance with the practice, and regard to the opinions of others. Men out of complaisance accompany others in doing ill; it is called good-nature, it is deemed good manners to do it; so very civilly and genteely, very nobly and gallantly they go on to perdition, giving up their salvation in compliment and courtesy to one another: then it is but natural for this most debonnair and generous dealing to requite one another with good words at least, or with some demonstrations of esteem; and it is no less natural for those who are thus shattered, to comply with the opinions of others, and to judge of themselves accordingly, thinking themselves good because they are called so: but to keep ourselves from being on such occasions, or on any the like grounds, perniciously cozened, we should consider that in the great judgment the esteem of men will import nothing of advantage to us; things will pass there as they are in themselves, not as they are rated here; according to real truth and intrinsic worth, not according to the conceits or affections of ignorant and partial men: even the things that appear fairest here may

prove foul there; persons much approved and applauded now may then be condemned and rejected; for 'God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.' God then will 'search the hearts and weigh the spirits of men;' he will scan their designs and intentions; he will closely examine their tempers, and exactly poise their circumstances; he will consider many things inscrutable to men, on which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend; wherefore most vain and unsafe it is to rely on the uncertain opinions of men, or to please ourselves with them; they neither can out of blindness, or will out of passion, interest, partiality, judge truly.

9. If we desire to judge reasonably about ourselves, or to know our true state, the only way is to compare our hearts and lives with the law of God, judging ourselves by that rule, according to which God will judge us. If we find in our hearts the love of God and goodness, (sincere, although imperfect;) if we perceive ourselves disposed to keep God's commandments, (to live piously, righteously, and soberly in this world;) then may we have a satisfactory hope concerning our state; then 'we may,' as St. John saith, 'have confidence toward God, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing to him:' but if we do not find that mind in us, and that practice, we, in conceiting well of ourselves on any other grounds, do but flatter and impose on ourselves; if all the world should account us good, and take us to be in a good case, we should not at all believe them, or mind them; for, 'Let no man deceive us; he that doeth righteousness,' he (and he alone) is righteous,' is the most faithful advice and unquestionable sentence of St. John. It is therefore (that by resting on such false bottoms we be not abused, and drawn thence to neglect the amendment of our hearts and ways, in order to our final account) a duty incumbent on us thus to search our hearts and try our ways, and accordingly to judge ourselves: the doing which with care and conscience would dispose us to prepare for the judgment we speak of; for, 'If,' saith St. Paul, 'we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,' or not condemned.

10. The consideration of this point will guard us from infidelity and from impatience in regard to the providential dispensation of affairs here: considering it, we shall not be offended at passages otherwise unaccountable and scandalous to Providence; we shall not wonder that so many disorders occur in the world; that right is perverted, that fraud and violence do prevail, that vice doth reign; we shall not complain of the adversities incident to good men, nor repine at the prosperities of bad men; we shall not be dissatisfied with any event here befalling ourselves or others; since from hence it doth most evidently appear that all these things are consistent with the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, and do assuredly tend to the declaration of those glorious attributes; yea, that consequently the worst accidents here, if we are faithful to God and to ourselves, will finally conduce to our advantage and benefit, according to that of the Apostle, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.'

11. In fine, there is no consideration able to promise so much efficacy toward the rousing our passions, or duly ordering and settling them on religious practice. It especially is apt to set on work those two grand engines and mighty springs of activity, hope and fear; and with them to raise their respective companions, joy and grief: for how, if we have been very culpable in the transgression and neglect of our duty, can we reflect on this point without being seized with an hideous dread of coming to so strict a trial, of falling under so heavy a sentence? how can we think of it without a bitter remorse? Hard as rocks surely we must be, if such thoughts do not pierce us; utterly dead and senseless must our hearts be, if they do not feel the sting of such considerations; more stupid and stony we then are, than the dissolute Felix, who could not without affrightment hear plain discourse concerning the judgment to come; yea, more inconsiderate and insensible we appear than those obstinate sons of darkness, the devils themselves, who believe and tremble thereat.

If, on the other hand, we are conscious to ourselves of having seriously and carefully endeavored to please God, and obey his commandments, how can we think of it without a

comfortable hope of finding mercy and favor in that day? If in our hearts we can say with St. Paul, 'I have combated the good combat, I have finished (or I have continued) the race, I have kept the faith;' then may we hopefully say after him, as he said confidently before us, 'From henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which in that day the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall render unto me.' If by virtue of 'the saving grace of God,' which 'hath appeared to all men,' and according to its holy instructions, we have 'denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and piously, in this present world;' then may we joyfully 'expect the blessed hope, and the appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;' then may we indeed heartily wish, cheerfully hope, and earnestly pray for that day; doing which is the character, and hath been the practice of the best men; 'The Lord,' saith St. Paul, 'will render the crown of righteousness to all them who love his appearance;' and, 'Looking for and hastening the presence of the day of God,' saith St. Peter, intimating the practice of the primitive Christians; and, 'Yea, come, O Lord Jesus,' is St. John's petition in the close of the Revelation, and may be the prayer of those who have the like conscience and affections with him.

I conclude, wishing and exhorting that the meditation of this most important affair may be continually present to our minds; that we may seem, with that devout man, always to hear the last trump sounding in our ears, and through our hearts; that so with a pious awe and a well-grounded hope we may expect 'the coming of our Lord,' and may 'love his appearance;' that from hence, being effectually restrained from all impious and vicious conversation, being induced to a circumspect and watchful pursuit of all piety and virtue, guiding our lives 'inoffensively in all good conscience toward God and man,' we may in the end be able to render a good account, and with comfort unexpressible may at that day, from the mouth of our Judge, hear those happy words, 'Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy;' 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Unto the possession whereof,

Almighty God in his infinite mercy, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, vouchsafe to bring us, through the merits of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom for ever be all glory and praise.' Amen.

'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXIV.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 16.

PRELIMINARY observations, and distribution of the heads of this discourse.

First consideration of the name of the Holy Spirit, whereby also his nature and origin are intimated.

In common use of most languages the name of *wind* or *spirit* serves to express those things, which, from the subtilty or tenuity of their nature being indiscernible to us, are yet conceived to be moved with great swiftness, and endued with great force: hence the word is transferred to denote those substances which are free of matter, and removed from sense; but which are endued with a very powerful activity and virtue, as also with understanding. Opinions of the Pagan philosophers agree in this.

Hence also the Holy Scriptures, with regard to our capacity and manner of conceiving ideas, do by this appellation adumbrate all those substances void of corporeal bulk, &c.; as human souls, angelic natures, and the Deity himself. To God indeed this name is attributed, to signify his most simple nature and powerful energy; but to other substances of this kind it seems also assigned, to imply the manner of their origin; because God did by a kind of spiration produce them: for which cause (at least in part) we may suppose that Scripture in a peculiar manner assigns it to one Being, that most excellent Being who is the subject of our discourse; the which is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit: and often absolutely, the Spirit. Other observations on this point.

These things being premised concerning the name of the Holy Spirit, his nature is considered.

I. It is first asserted that he is a Being in some sense truly distinct from the Father and the Son; contrary to that opinion of Sabellius, Noetus, &c.; which, confounding the three, and destroying their substantial properties, made of all one Person, under several names: this enlarged on.

The Holy Ghost then is distinct from the Father; for he is called the *Spirit of the Father;* is said to *go out*, or proceed from the Father; also to be sent or conferred by him. Divers things are attributed to the Spirit which do not well agree with the Father: these shown. He is our Advocate with God, interceding with the Father; which office manifestly supposes a distinction.

For like reasons he is distinguished from the Son: for,

He is called the *Spirit of the Son:* he is sent by him; he descended on him, and abode with him, &c. Christ distinguishes between the speaking against the Son, and the blaspheming the Holy Ghost; he is said to glorify the Son; the Son suffered many things personally, which cannot be attributed to him; he is expressly *said* to be distinct from the Son: John xiv. 16.

So also jointly with all three Persons, this distinction is signified; by a constant economy, a certain order, proper offices, and peculiar energies: this indicated. The same also signified in the form of baptism.

II. Again, it is affirmed that the Holy Spirit is a Person; by which is understood a singular, subsistent, intellectual Being: this topic enlarged on. This point explained.

1. From those things which have been before shown concerning the distinction of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

2. From the very name of *Spirit*, which primarily is imposed on substances, both corporeal and intellectual; belonging to God, *essentially* understood, to angels, to human souls; all which things are substances: this enlarged on.

3. From the Scripture commonly describing the Holy Spirit as a *person*; calling him not *it*, but *he*, &c.—from its attributing to him personal offices, of a master, leader, guide, monitor, witness; yea, of a legate, &c.—from its attributing also to him personal faculties and operations, such as understanding, will, affections of grief and anger, those of sense, &c.: these shown.

4. The Holy Spirit, in the same manner and by like right as the Father and the Son, is the object of our faith, worship, and obedience; the which, as by many other ways, appears also from the form of baptism prescribed by our Lord: this topic enlarged on.

5. The personality of the Holy Ghost is also perspicuously evinced, from its being represented under the visible shape of a subsistent thing, ἐν εἴδει σωματικῷ, as is stated in the gospel.

III. It is, in the third place, asserted (supposing his personality) that the Holy Ghost is God, co-essential with God the Father, and God the Son: this proved by the following arguments.

1. The most proper names of God, and the most divine titles, are everywhere (according to just interpretation and by conspicuous consequence) attributed to him; inasmuch as, on various occasions, the same words, works, and acts are referred to God and the Holy Spirit: this fully shown.

2. To the Holy Spirit are most expressly attributed all the incommunicable perfections of God; the essential characters and properties of the divine nature: this also shown.

3. Most divine operations, transcending the power of any created being, are ascribed to the Holy Ghost: this explained.

4. The divine majesty of the Holy Spirit may also be asserted from the divine worship which is to be yielded to him, by God's appointment; as in the case of baptism, &c.

5. Again, whereas Christ, even as a man, is elevated above

all creatures, he is yet in that respect inferior to the Holy Spirit; forasmuch as he received his nature from him, (Mat. i. 20.) and *more honor than the house hath he that made it*, says the Apostle: this topic enlarged on.

6. It may be added that, whereas on divers occasions the ranks and orders of *creatures* are mentioned in Scripture, this top and leader of all creatures, if creature he be, is wholly omitted, &c. To the preceding arguments may be added, the authority of so many Fathers and Councils, and the constant consent of the church.

IV. The next point considered is the original of the Holy Spirit; which we assert to be in way of procession jointly from God the Father and God the Son: this explained.

The Holy Spirit is not from himself, as the Father is; or else there would be more first principles than one, and consequently more gods than one. That he proceeds from the Father appears from this, that the Father is the fountain of all essence; and by our Saviour the Spirit is said *to go out from the Father*; &c.

That he also proceeds from the Son may be shown, 1. Because, as he is called the Spirit of the Father, so also he is often styled the Spirit of the Son. 2. As he is said to be sent from the Father, so also is he from the Son. 3. The Son saith of the Holy Spirit, *He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you*; that is, he receives knowlege from the Son; which, since he is God, cannot be any otherwise than by his receiving his essence from the Son. 4. The Holy Spirit is a Person third in order. 5. Our Saviour himself did signify this *procession* from himself, when breathing on his disciples, he said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. 6. To these arguments may be added, the consentient authority of the Latin Fathers, and the most ancient of the Greek.

V. Concerning the peculiar offices, functions, and operations of the Holy Spirit.

1. It is his especial work to declare God's mind to us; whence he is styled the *Spirit of truth, of prophecy, of revelation;* &c.: by his inspirarion the holy Scriptures were conceived. 2. To him it especially belongs to execute the will of God, in matters transcending the ordinary power and course of nature: whence he is called the *power of the Most High;* &c. 3. By him God manages that great instrument of our salvation, the working in us all good dispositions, the enlightening of our minds, aud the sanctification of our hearts, the assuring us of God's favor, and the confirming of our hopes; &c. 4. He is also our intercessor with God, and thence called *the Advocate.* 5. To which we may add, that the Holy Ghost bears the office of a soul to God's church, informing, enlivening, and actuating the whole body thereof; connecting its members in spiritual union, quickening its governors and pastors, constituting them in their several functions, and enabling them to discharge their duties, &c.

VI. Brief application of this doctrine to practice.

1. We are, on the premises, obliged to render all honor and adoration to the majesty of the divine Spirit. 2. To entertain a humble affection and devout gratitude to God for so inestimable a favor conferred on us, as is the presence of his Holy Spirit. 3. To desire earnestly and pray for such excellent graces, privileges, and joys, to which he will introduce us: for *our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them which ask it.* 4. We should endeavor to demean ourselves well towards this heavenly guest, when he vouchsafes to visit us. 5. It is matter of great comfort and consolation to consider that we have such a guide and assistant in our religious practice and spiritual warfare.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

SERMON XXXIV.

THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 16.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

My purpose is at this time, for our edification in Christian knowlege concerning that grand object of our faith and author of our salvation, the Holy Ghost; and for arming us against erroneous opinions about him, such as have been vented in former ages, and have been revived in this; to explain briefly the name, nature, and original of the Holy Ghost, (according to what appears discovered of him in the sacred writings;) to consider also the peculiar characters, offices, and operations, which (according to the mysterious economy revealed in the gospel) are assigned and attributed to him; so that incidentally by testimonies of Scripture, and arguments deduced thence, I shall assert the principal doctrines received in the church, in opposition to the most famously heterodox dogmatists that have appeared. For the doing which this text of St. Paul doth minister good occasion: for the full explication thereof doth require a clearing of the particulars mentioned, and itself affordeth good arguments against the principal errors about this matter. His being called the Spirit of God may engage us to consider his nature and original; his being said to dwell in us doth imply his personality; his divinity appears in that Chris-

tians are called the temple of God, because the Holy Ghost dwelleth in them; his sanctifying virtue may be inferred from his constituting us temples by his presence in us. I shall then in order prosecute the points mentioned; and lastly shall adjoin somewhat of practical application.

1. First, then, for the name of the Holy Spirit; whereby also his nature and origin are intimated.

Of those things which do not immediately incur our sight, but do by conspicuous effects discover their existence, there is scarce any thing in substance more pure and subtile, in motion more quick and nimble, in efficacy more strong and powerful, than wind, (or spirit.) Hence in common use of most languages the name of wind or spirit doth serve to express those things, which from the subtilty or tenuity of their nature being indiscernible to us, are yet conceived to be moved with great pernicity, and to be endued with great force; so naturalists, we see, are wont to name that which in any body is most abstruse, most agile, and most operative in spirit. Hence it comes that this word is transferred to denote those substances which are free of matter, and removed from sense, but are endued (as with understanding, so) with a very powerful activity and virtue. Even among the Pagans these sort of beings were called spirits: the souls of men are by them so termed; (*anima* hath its derivation from ἄνεμος, wind.) 'Our life,' saith Cicero, 'is contained by (or comprised in) body and spirit:'* and, 'We,' saith he again, 'are at the same time received into the light, and endued with this heavenly spirit,'† that is, with our soul. Particularly the Stoics used to apply this name to our soul; 'I allege the Stoics,' saith Tertullian, 'who call the soul a spirit, almost therein agreeing with us Christians.'‡ They likewise frequently did attribute this appellation to God;

> —— Cœlum et terram camposque liquentes,
> Lucentemque globum terræ, Titaniaque astra
> Spiritus intus agit——

said the prince of their poets: by the word spirit understanding (as Lactantius and Macrobius do interpret him) God him-

* Or. pro Mar. † De Arusp. resp. ‡ Tert. de Anim. 5.

self, that pierceth and acteth all things; yea he so otherwhere expoundeth his own mind, when he to the same purpose sings,

——Deum ire per omnes
Terrasque tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum.

And the Orator, in his Dialogues, maketh Balbus to speak thus; 'These things truly could not, all the parts of the world so conspiring together, be so performed, if they were not contained (or kept together) by one divine and continued Spirit:'* and Seneca clearly: 'God,' saith he, 'is nigh to thee, he is with thee, he is in thee: I tell thee, O Lucilius, a holy Spirit resideth within us, an observer and guardian of our good and our bad things, (or doings,) who, as he hath been dealt with by us, so he dealeth with us: there is no good man (or no man is good) without God:'† and Zeno defined God thus; 'God is a Spirit, passing through the whole world;' Posidonius also more largely; 'God is an intellectual and fiery Spirit, not having shape; but changing into what things he will, and assimilated to all things.'

In like manner hence the holy Scriptures, with regard to our capacity and manner of conceiving, do with the same appellation adumbrate all those kind of substances void of corporeal bulk and concretion; human souls, all the angelical natures, and the incomprehensible Deity itself. And to God indeed this name is attributed to signify his most simple nature and his most powerful energy; but to other substances of this kind it seemeth also assigned to imply the manner of their origin, because God did by a kind of spiration produce them: for which cause likewise (at least in part) we may suppose that the holy Scripture doth more signally and in a peculiar manner assign that name to one Being, that most excellent Being which is the subject of our present discourse: the which is called the Spirit of God; (that is, of God the Father, who by reason of his priority of nature is often called God, in a personal signification;) the good Spirit of God; the Spirit of Christ; the Holy Spirit; and often absolutely, in way of excellence, the Spirit.

* De Nat. Deor. ii. p. 60. † Sen. Ep. 41.

The same is also called the power or virtue of God; about the reason of which appellation we may briefly observe that whereas in every intellectual being there are conceived to be three principal faculties, will, understanding, efficacy; and correspondent to these three perfections, goodness, wisdom, power; a certain one of these (according to that mystical economy or husbandry of notions, whereby the manner and order of subsisting and operation proper to each person in the blessed Trinity is insinuated) is in a certain manner appropriated to each person; (so I now by anticipation speak, being to warrant these terms hereafter;) namely, to the Father it is ascribed that he freely decreeth what things should be done; to the Son, that he disposeth them in a most wise method and order toward their effecting; to the Holy Ghost, that he with a powerful force doth execute and effect them: whence as God is said, according to his pleasure, to decree and determine things, [and to θέλημα, the will, is a name by some writers assigned to him; particularly Ignatius doth in his epistles frequently so style him; and so St. Paul may be understood, where he saith, καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα, 'And thou knowest the will;' that is, knowest God the Father: and St. Peter, 'For it is better, that ye (εἰ θέλει τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ,) if the will of God pleaseth, to suffer for well doing than for evil doing,'] as the Son is called the wisdom of God, so the Holy Spirit is named 'the power of God;' his substantial power, as we shall show. To this Being, whatever it is, it is manifest that properly and primarily the name of Holy Spirit is appropriated; but (which we should consider) from thence (as is usual in other cases and matters) by figurative deflexion of speech, (or by metonymy,) the manner of that operation which that Holy Spirit doth exert, his influence and efficacy, and also any sort of effects proceeding from him, do commonly assume or partake of this name. So when from this Spirit, in a very conspicuous manner, an excellent virtue of performing miraculous works was liberally imparted to the Apostles, that virtue (or the manifest communication thereof, 'the manifestation of the Spirit,' as St. Paul calleth it) is named the Holy Ghost: as when in St. John's gospel it is said, 'The Holy Spirit was not yet;' that is, the Apostles had not yet received that excellent gift; or

that marvellous efficacy of the Holy Spirit had not yet discovered itself in them: as also when in the Acts some disciples are said 'not to have heard whether there were any Holy Spirit;' that is, they were not acquainted concerning that peculiar efficacy thereof. When also there are mentioned the spirit of prophecy, the spirit of revelation, the spirit of wisdom, (which sort of spirits are said to be increased, to be taken away, to be quenched,) it is plain that by those phrases, not the Holy Spirit of God itself, (which in no sense is liable to such accidents,) but gifts, fruits, or effects thereof are denoted; some of which sometime are in the plural number called πνεύματα, spirits; as when St. Paul enjoineth the Corinthians to be zealous or earnestly desirous) of spirits; that is, of spiritual gifts, or graces, or revelations; and when 'the discerning of spirits' (that is, of divine revelations, true or counterfeit) is said to be granted to some, and where the spirits of prophets are said to be subject or subordinate to prophets, (that is, one prophet had a right and ability to judge about the revelations made to another, or pretended to be so:) but these and the like figurative senses being excluded, we discourse about the Holy Spirit in its most proper and primary sense; as it is in and from God.

Which things being premised concerning the name of the Holy Spirit; for explication of his nature,

I. We do first assert that it is a Being in some sense truly distinct from the Father and the Son; hereby rejecting the opinion of Sabellius, Noetus, Hermogenes, and Praxeas; which confounding the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and destroying their substantial properties, did of them all make but one Person, under several names; affirming ἐν μιᾷ ὑποστάσει τρεῖς ὀνομασίας, in one person three appellations, and making τὴν τριάδα συναλαφὴν, the Trinity to be a coincidence, as Epiphanius speaks. [I said, truly distinct; for this word *distinction* is by the schoolmen conceived more commodiously applied to this mystery, than others of near signification; those of *diversity* and *difference* seeming to intimate somewhat prejudicial to the unity of essence; *In divinis* (in the mystery of the Trinity) 'we must,' saith Aquinas, 'avoid the name of diversity and of difference, but we may use the name of distinction, be-

cause of the relative opposition:' which caution yet the ancient Fathers do not so precisely observe; for sometimes in them, προσώπων ἑτερότης and διαφορὰ, (the diversity and difference of the persons,) sometimes also the word διαίρεσις, the division of them, do occur; although they seem more willingly to use the word διάκρισις, *distinction:* that which we simply affirm is, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, τοῖς ἰδιώμασι διακρίνονται, are distinguished in properties, as Gregory Nyssen speaks; are ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος, as Gregory Nazianzen says; that is, truly more than in mere name or conception distinguished, by their properties and relations.]

The Holy Ghost, is, I say, truly distinct from the Father and the Son: this we shall first show separately, then jointly, in regard to both.

He is distinguished from the Father; for,

1. He is called the 'Spirit of the Father;' which relation surely is not devised by fancy, or wants a real foundation; and therefore its terms are truly distinct. 2. The Holy Spirit is said ἐκπορεύεσθαι, that is, to go out, or proceed from the Father: he is therefore another from him: for a thing cannot be deemed really to proceed from another, from which it only is distinguished in name or conceit. 3. It is also said to be sent, conferred, given by the Father; which surely argueth some kind of true distinction. 4. Divers things are attributed to the Spirit, which do not well agree to the Father; as particularly that he appeared εἴδει σωματικῷ, 'in a bodily form;' that he descended and rested on our Lord, the Baptist beholding him; 'I saw,' saith St. John, 'the Spirit descending as a dove, and it abode on him.' But, God the Father no man, saith St. John, ever saw; nor, addeth St. Paul, 'can any man see him.' 5. The Holy Spirit is our advocate with God, crying in our hearts, and interceding with the Father for us, (ὑπερεντυγχάνων, saith St. Paul:) that office, that act, do manifestly suppose a true distinction.

For like reasons he is also distinguished from the Son; for, 1. He is called the Spirit of the Son; and that relation implies a real ground. 2. He is sent by the Son; ἰδοῦ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω, 'Behold,' saith our Lord, 'I send him:' and, 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I

depart, I will send him unto you.' 3. He descended on Christ, and abode on him; he filled him, he led or acted him; he anointed him; by his operation Christ did assume flesh: wherefore he is distinguished from the Son. 4. Christ plainly distinguishes between speaking against the Son and blaspheming against the Holy Ghost; which supposes them two objects. 5. The Holy Ghost is said to receive from the Son that which he should tell to Christ's disciples, and thence to glorify the Son. 6. The Son did and suffered many things personally which cannot agree, and cannot be attributed to the Holy Ghost; as that he was incarnated and assumed man's nature; that he suffered, rose again, ascended into heaven. 7. He is expressly said to be distinct from the Son; 'I,' saith he, 'will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter.' So separately may the Holy Spirit be showed distinct from each; and jointly in several places that distinction is signified. For to those three, by a constant economy, a certain order is assigned, some proper offices and peculiar energies are ascribed, which it is not reasonable to think done without a real foundation; 'By Christ,' saith St. Paul, 'we have an access in one Spirit to the Father:' why must we proceed by this circuit, in this certain method, if the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are only distinguished in name? Wherefore also doth the same Apostle bless us; 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.' To what end also doth he distinctively assign a peculiar dispensation of operations to the Father, of ministries to the Son, of gifts to the Holy Ghost? Wherefore likewise doth St. Peter ascribe our election to the Father predestinating, to the Son propitiating, to the Holy Ghost sanctificating? Doth it agree to the gravity, simplicity, and sincerity of the divine oracles, so in a perpetual tenor to propound those three, as three, divers, not only in names, but in reality, in manner of being, in manner of operation, if there be no other under all, but a nominal or notional distinction? What would this be, but not only to yield us an occasion, but to impose a necessity of erring? Shall we think those principal masters of truth purposely argute, perplexed, and obscure in their speech? Farthermore, St. John affirms in his first Epistle, (at least, if there

the text be authentic,) that 'there are three which bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;' the which also, undoubtedly, (although not so conjoinedly as in his Epistle,) he assures in his gospel; for, 'I am he,' saith Christ, 'who bear witness of myself, and the Father which sent me beareth witness of me;' and, 'When the Comforter shall come, he will bear witness of me:' so there are, we see, three witnesses, which our Lord appealeth to: but three names, (as for instance, Marcus, Tullius, Cicero,) or the same thing having three names, will not constitute three witnesses. In fine, the form of baptism evinceth this distinction: for at our baptism we profess to acknowlege the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; we perform worship, and promise obedience to them all; which doing Sabellius would have us do, as if subjects should be required to oblige their faith to Caius, Julius, and Cæsar; which kind of proceeding it seems absurd to suppose that God should solemnly institute. This may be sufficient to overthrow the Sabellian error.

II. Again, we affirm the Holy Spirit to be a person. By a person we understand a singular, subsistent, intellectual being; or, (as Boethius defines it,) 'an individual substance of a rational nature.' The Greek writers use the word ὑπόστασις, (which word being of wider signification doth comprehend also things void of understanding, importing) substance, concretely taken, or a thing subsistent, (τὸ ἐνυπόστατον,) which term is extant even in the Scripture, where the Son of God, in respect to his Father, is called χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, (the character of his substance, or person:) whence there was less cause that St. Jerome and other Latin ancient writers should so avoid, or timidly admit, the word hypostasis; as fearing that by use thereof they should seem to acknowlege three essences; seeing, as St. Austin notes, according to most common acception, substance denoted the same with essence; 'whence,' saith he, 'we dare not say one essence, three substances; but one essence, (or substance,) three persons:'* but this (as Gregory Nazianzene did consider) was nothing else but περὶ λεξειδιῶν ἐνγομαχεῖν, 'to contest about syllables;' or περὶ τὸν ἦχον

* Orat. xxxix. 32.

μικρολογεῖν, 'to mince about sounds;' seeing whether we call it either person or subsistence, we mean the same thing. We however affirming the Holy Spirit to be a person, do thereby intend to exclude the opinion of Socinus and his followers, which asserts the Holy Spirit to be only an accident, or an accidental thing; to wit, a divine power, virtue, or efficacy, resident in God, or derived from him.

1. Now this we persuade first from those things, which we before did show concerning the distinction of the Father and the Holy Spirit; for that slender (or rather no) distinction, such as may be conceived to be between any being and its efficacy, (especially in this case, attending to the most simple nature of God, and his most simple manner of acting,) doth not well reach the business, nor doth suffice to found that distinction which the Scripture doth (as we showed) constitute between the Father and Holy Spirit. Indeed Socinus, as to this point, (however it be that he sometimes objecteth Sabellianism to the Catholics,) doth scarce himself differ from Sabellius: for Sabellius himself did avow the Son and Holy Spirit to be divers energies of the Father, and that they are distinguished from him as light and heat from the sun; which did not hinder the Fathers from refuting him, as putting no true distinction between them; as indeed God in the thing itself (or beyond the manner of our conception and expression) is not distinguished from his power and efficacy.

2. Again, this may be collected from the very name of Spirit, the which primarily is imposed on substances, both corporeal and incorporeal; belonging to God, essentially understood, to angels, to human souls; all which things are substances: whence it is probable that to the Being of which we treat, because it in like manner is a substance, this name of Spirit is assigned by God, the best author of words; the epithet Holy being adjoined for distinction sake. This is confirmed from that whereas God essentially is a spirit, (as is expressed in St. John's Gospel,) his efficacy cannot aptly assume the same name; as because our soul is essentially a spirit, it were incongruous to call any virtue thereof a spirit. The same is farther hence confirmed, for that the evil Spirit, which is opposed to the good Spirit of God, is not an efficacy of God,

but a subsistent being; which argueth the good Spirit also to be likewise subsistent. The same is corroborated from the Apostle's comparing the Spirit of God to that spirit, which being in man, doth search and discern his inward counsels and purposes: but the spirit of man is a substantial thing; wherefore it is intimated, that correspondently the Spirit of God is such a Being. We add to these things, that power, virtue, efficacy, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; 'That you may,' saith St. Paul, 'abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost:' but that power should be attributed unto power, or efficacy to efficacy, is not congruous.

3. The holy Scripture (to whose speech it becometh us to suit our conceptions) doth commonly describe the Holy Spirit as a person, enjoying personal titles, offices, attributes, and operations; and those such which neither in sound nor sense do agree to mere efficacy.

1. Speaking of the Holy Ghost, it purposely and carefully, as it were, doth accommodate the article agreeing to a person: not *it*, but *he*, is the article commonly assigned to the Spirit; and that with marks of doing it studiously: Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, 'When he (in the masculine gender) comes, the Spirit of truth,' (in the neuter,) it is said in St. John's Gospel: and, Τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, 'None (in the masculine gender again) knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God.' Why, otherwise beside analogy of grammar, should the style be so tempered or inflicted, but to insinuate the Holy Spirit's personality? If he were nothing else but the virtue of God, there were no need, or rather it would be inconvenient, so to phrase it.

2. Again, the Scripture attributes personal offices to the Holy Spirit; the office of a master, ('He shall teach you;') of a leader, or guide, ('He shall lead you into all truth;') of a monitor, ('He shall bring all things to your remembrance;') of a witness, ('He shall testify concerning me;') yea, which more strongly evinceth, of a legate, who declareth God's mind, not as from himself, but as deputed and furnished with instructions from the Father and the Son; 'He shall not,' it is said, 'speak from himself; but whatever things he shall hear, he shall speak; and he will tell you things to come:' 'All things that the

Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you:' which expressions do in no sort well agree to the divine power or efficacy; but evidently respect a person: for what is performed by any agent, to say that of its efficacy, as distinct from it, is beside the reason and manner of speech; and doth especially disagree with the nature and genius of the divine Scripture, which undertaketh most simply and plainly to instruct us. That God's efficacy should be sent from the Father and Son; that it should speak, that it should hear from the Father and the Son; how strangely hard and obscure a manner of speaking is that! from them, not from himself: what himself can they imagine, who distinguish him not from God, and allow him no personality? why should we without necessity asperse the holy Scripture, made clearly to instruct us, with such mistiness and darkness? Likewise to the Holy Spirit is attributed the office of a paraclete, or advocate, who pleadeth our cause with God, praying and interceding with God for us: but that God's efficacy (which can hardly be conceived, which should not be conceived, distinct from God) should speak to God, should interpose itself between us, is, as the rest, too perplexed and intricate a saying.

3. Farthermore, the holy Scripture doth to the Holy Spirit attribute faculties and operations annexed to him plainly personal: such are understanding: ('the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God:' 'The things of God none knoweth, but the Spirit of God:') will; ('He divideth to every one as he willeth:') affections; of grief, ('Grieve not the Holy Spirit:') and anger, ('They provoked his Holy Spirit:') sense; ('what he shall hear, he will speak:') speech, there and in many other places; ('It is not you,' saith our Saviour, 'that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that is in you:' and, 'The Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them:' and again, very emphatically, 'While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.') Now these and the like faculties and acts are clearly personal; not representing any quality, or energy, but a live and intellectual substance. To interpret all these things as spoken by fiction or dramatically, what is it but to transform God's oracles into Pythian riddles, and of theo-

logy to frame a mythology? That sometimes for emphasis sake, in matters less dark or high, the holy Scripture may sometime use such schemes, nothing, I confess, doth hinder; but that perpetually it should involve such a most grave and sublime matter with such tortuous forms of speech, doth in truth not seem consentaneous to its most holy and simple majesty: as more simply, more clearly, and more intelligibly, so more compendiously, it might have been said, God knoweth, God willeth, God is thus or thus affected, God speaketh; than, God's virtue knoweth, God's power willeth, God's efficacy speaketh: if these manners of speech did not otherwise differ, at least the former would be more clear, simple, and expedite, nor would it so yield occasion to errors and doubts; and therefore more worthy it would be of the holy writ. However such prosopopœias should not be inept, but such as most appositely should agree to the matter proposed, which would not happen in this case: for of those personal attributes some at least do scarce admit those figurate senses, or do plainly refuse them; it is hard to say that a divine power doth know or hear; and who will say that a divine efficacy is affected with anger or sorrow?

I add, that when the sin of blasphemy is said to be committed against the Holy Spirit, just in the same form of speech as against the Son, it is signified that the Holy Spirit is in the same manner a Person as the Son is a Person; otherwise the comparison would not seem to be well framed.

4. The Holy Spirit, in the same manner, and by like right as the Father and Son, is the object of our faith, worship, obedience; the which, as by divers other ways, (as afterwards we may show,) so especially doth appear from the form of baptism instituted and prescribed by our Lord; where we as well are baptised into the name of the Holy Spirit, as of the Father and Son: wherein is signified, and by a solemn contestation ratified, on the part of God, that those three, joined and confederated as it were, are conspiringly propitious and favorable to us; that they do receive us into their discipline, grace, and patronage; that they are ready, and by virtue of promise in a manner bound, to bestow on us excellent benefits and privileges; (on us, I say, performing the laws and conditions of the cove-

nant then entered into;) on our part, that we do with sound and firm faith equally (that is, thoroughly and intirely) acknowlege and confess those three; that we repose an equal (that is, a most firm) hope and confidence in them: that we do most highly reverence all and each of them; that we do sincerely and seriously undertake and promise a perpetual (and, nearest to what we are able, a perfect) obedience to them: doing which things, we do (as Athanasius, or an ancient writer under his name, observeth) yield more than a simple adoration to the Holy Spirit; ('Since,' saith he, 'they that are catechised in order to baptism, are not, before they are baptised, perfect Christians, but being baptised are consummated; baptism therefore imports more than adoration:'*) hence who sees not in this first and principal mystery of our religion the Holy Spirit is exhibited to us as a Person; that about him, as such, this excellent part of our duty, this eximious worship, is conversant? Attending to this point we may also see the adverse opinion to be urged with many inconveniences: for if the Holy Spirit be not a person, not aptly (or rather very incongruously) he is put into the same rank with the other two Persons; not rightly are things so wholly differing in kind (things subsistent and not subsistent) conjoined, and just in the same form proposed as like objects of worship; yea superfluously and to no purpose doth the Holy Spirit seem to be adjoined, if by it nothing beside the divine efficacy is designed: for acknowleging the Father, we do withal acknowlege his power and efficacy, congruous to the divine nature; worshipping the Father, we do together adore his power; devoting ourselves in obedience to the Father, we do likewise subject ourselves to his power; as if one hath promised faith and loyalty to the king, he therein hath abundantly satisfied his duty; so that there is no farther need to profess himself devoted to the king's power or efficacy: who sees not that in such a case it is superfluous and idle to sever the king from his royal power? One may also ask, why with as good reason we should not be consecrated into the name of the divine goodness, of the divine justice, of the divine wisdom, or of any other divine attribute, as into the name of

* Athan. Dial. 1. contra Maced. p. 265.

the divine power? The Socinian exposition therefore doth cast strange clouds and incongruities on this august mystery; which yet in decency should be most clearly and simply propounded, lest in the very entrance of our Christian profession an occasion should be given of stumbling into great error.

5. The personality of the Holy Ghost is also perspicuously evinced, from its being represented under the visible shape of a subsistent thing. A substantial thing is no proper symbol or representative of a thing accidental, nor commodiously may assume its name: to a thing having no subsistence it doth not well suit to descend like a dove, and to rest on Christ: supposing the Spirit were only the efficacy of God the Father, seeing the effects of faculties and operations are most aptly attributed to the persons having or exerting them, it could have been said (and that more rightly and properly) that the Father himself did appear in a corporeal figure, that the Father descended, that the Father sate on Christ, that the Father was seen by the holy Baptist; the which it were rash to affirm.

I forbear to allege that the Holy Spirit is reckoned among the three that bear witness in heaven; that the sin against the Holy Ghost is distinguished from the sin against God the Father. I also pass over that a Trinity of Persons (as many of the Fathers conceive) was represented in the apparition to Abraham; where it is said, 'The Lord appeared,' and 'three men appeared to him;' as also that the hymn (Trisagias) in Isaiah and the Apocalypse do insinuate it; likewise that the phrases, *Creavit Elohim*, (*Gods* in the plural, *did create* in the singular;) *Faciamus hominem*, Let us make man; *Jehovah Elohim*, the Lord our Gods; and the like, may well hither be referred. For from what hath been said the Socinian error may seem abundantly confuted.

III. We, thirdly, now do assert (supposing his personality) that the Holy Spirit is God, co-essential to God the Father and God the Son; or that the one divine nature (with all its attributes and perfections) is common to him with the Father; or that (which is the same) the Holy Spirit is God, that most high God, most absolutely and properly so called: (for, seeing the holy Scriptures do frequently inculcate that there is but one

God, if the Holy Spirit be God, he must necessarily be co-essential to the Father and the Son.) Now that he is God, we, against the Macedonians, or Semi-Arians, do assert, and by these arguments prove.

1. The most proper names of God and the most divine titles are everywhere (according to just interpretation and by perspicuous consequence) attributed unto the Holy Spirit: inasmuch as often, (almost ever,) on various occasions, the same words, works, and acts are referred to God and to the Holy Spirit; so that whatever God is said to have spoken, to have performed, to have made, that also is reported said, transacted, produced by the Holy Ghost; and reciprocally, whatever doth any way regard the Holy Spirit, that is referred to God: the which doth argue that between the beings denoted by the names God and Holy Spirit an essential identity or unity doth intercede. Of the Israelites being wickedly incredulous and refractory it is said, 'They tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:' the same Isaiah thus expresseth; 'They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.' In Isaiah (vi. 9.) God is said to send the prophets; St. Paul reporting it saith the Holy Ghost sent them. St. Peter chargeth Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit; and thence that he had lied to God: 'Ananias,' saith he, 'why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?' presently he subjoins, 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God:' he plainly by those names designeth the same things, and more than intimates it to be the same thing to lie to God, and to lie to the Spirit. Our Lord, as man, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and for that reason was the Son of God; 'The Holy Ghost,' said the angel, 'shall come on thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God:' what consequence were there of this, if the Holy Ghost is not God? Our Lord also is said to have performed his miracles by the power of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit indifferently; 'If I,' saith he in St. Matthew, 'by the Spirit of God cast out devils:' in St. Luke he saith, 'If I by the finger (that is, by the power) of God cast out devils:' and both phrases St. Paul doth equipollently express by 'the power of the Holy Ghost:' and St.

Peter says that 'God did the miracles by him.' The holy Scripture, because dictated by the Holy Spirit, is said to be θεόπνευστοι, or inspired by God. The 'Spirit spake in the prophets,' saith St. Peter, and the other holy writers commonly: 'God spake in them,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews; and others likewise so often as the holy Scripture is called the word of God. The Holy Spirit 'doth shed abroad' and work 'charity in our hearts;' we are thence said to be θεοδίδακτοι, taught by God to love one another; yea every virtue, all holiness, is promiscuously ascribed to God and the Holy Ghost as its immediate authors; 'To be led by the Spirit of God,' and, 'God worketh in us to will and to do,' do signify the same thing. Every faithful Christian is therefore called a temple, (that is, a place consecrated to God,) because the Holy Spirit in a special manner is present in him; 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' saith St. Paul in our text; know ye not that ye are God's temple? whence should we know it? from hence, that God's Spirit inhabiteth you; because the inhabitation of the Spirit is the same with the inhabitation of God. The same Apostle again; 'In whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;' for an habitation of God in the Spirit; that is therefore an habitation of God, because the Spirit dwelleth in you: how could the divinity of the Holy Spirit be more expressly declared? We may add that St. Paul calleth the Holy Spirit, Lord, ὁ δὲ Κύριος τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστι, 'But the Lord is that Spirit;' which Spirit, in the words immediately following, is called 'the Spirit of the Lord;' the which also before, as St. Chrysostom noteth, is called 'the Spirit of the living God:' the Spirit therefore of the Lord is the Lord himself, unto whom the Jews, when the veil covering their minds is taken off, shall return. (Lastly, St. John affirms the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be one; and therefore the Holy Ghost is God.)

Hence (for corollary to this argument) we see how we may retund the importunity of the Macedonians, who did nothing but ask where in Scripture the Holy Ghost is called God: where, say you, is he called God? where not? say I: almost every where he in effect is so called: seeing when all about in

the same deed, or in the same history, the same words and acts are reported of Cæsar and of the Emperor, it may rightly be pronounced, that Cæsar is there called Emperor; which no man, I suppose, will contradict. The case is here plainly the same between the Holy Spirit and God.

2. To the Holy Spirit are most expressly attributed all the incommunicable perfections of God; the essential characters and properties of the divine nature. The very epithet of holy (absolutely, in way of excellence characteristically put) is one of them: for, as it is in Hannah's song, 'There is none holy as the Lord; neither is there any beside thee:' there is none beside God absolutely and perfectly holy, (that is, by a most remote distance severed from all things, far exalted above all things, peculiarly venerable and august in majesty,) whence ὁ ἅγιος, 'the Holy One,' is a distinctive title of God. Yea the name of spirit itself (absolutely and eminently put, and so importing highest purity and perfectest actuality) doth seem to imply the same. Also eternity, immensity, omniscience, omnipotency, (than which no more high perfections, or more proper to God, can be conceived,) are attributed to the Holy Spirit. Eternity; for the Apostle to the Hebrews calls him αἰώνιον Πνεῦμα, 'the eternal Spirit;' ('How much more,' saith he, 'shall the blood of Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience?') Immensity; 'Whither,' saith the Psalmist, 'shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I fly from thy face?' the question involveth a negation; and signifieth a manifest reason thereof: I cannot fly any whither from thy Spirit, because it is every where present. Omniscience; 'The Spirit,' saith St. Paul, 'doth search all things, (that is, it perfectly comprehendeth all things,) even the deep things of God;' τὰ βάθη, the depths, or deepest things of God, and consequently all things which God knows, or can be known,) even those things, which to comprehend doth as far exceed the condition of a creature, as it goeth beyond the capacity of one man to discern the cogitations and affections of another man; for such a comparison St. Paul doth make: our Saviour in the gospel saith, ('None knoweth who is the Son, but the Father; nor who is the Father, but the Son:' but the Holy Spirit did questionless know who was the Father,

and who the Son: he had a knowlege therefore most divine and incommunicable.) Particularly to the Holy Spirit is assigned the knowlege of future contingencies; which knowlege is peculiarly high and most proper to God, and is therefore called divination; the which peculiarly is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, as its immediate principle; whence he is called the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of truth; and from him all the prophets are said to derive their foreknowing power. To these may be adjoined other no less divine attributes of the Holy Spirit; as independency in will and operation; for, 'All these things,' (saith St. Paul, that is, the production of those excellent graces, the distribution of those wonderful gifts) 'doth one and the same Spirit work, dividing to every one as he willeth.' And as the 'wind bloweth where it willeth,' nor can be determined or hindered by any thing, so (as our Lord insinuates in the gospel) the Holy Spirit according to his pleasure worketh every where. Absolute goodness, which belongeth only to God; (for, 'There is none good but one, God himself;') but, 'Thy Spirit,' saith the Psalmist, 'is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.' Most absolute veracity, (which also doth imply both perfect knowlege and extreme goodness,) the which is signified by the title of truth abstractedly assigned to him; 'It is,' saith St. John, 'the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth;' that is, most absolutely and perfectly veracious. In fine, omnipotency doth belong to the Holy Spirit, as by his works doth appear, which we shall immediately propound in the next argument. For,

3. Most divine operations (transcending the power of any created thing) are ascribed to the Holy Ghost: such are; To create things, and make the world; for it was the Spirit which resting on the unshapen mass did hatch the world: 'By his Spirit,' saith Job, 'he hath garnished the heavens:' [and, 'By the word of the Lord,' saith the Psalmist, 'were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth,' or by his Spirit:] 'But he,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, 'who made all things is God.' To conserve things; 'Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth,' saith the Psalmist; speaking about the

continued production, or conservation of things. Particularly to produce man, both at first and continually; for the soul of the protoplast was derived from the Spirit of God; and good Elihu professeth of himself; 'The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life:' yea, (which worthily may be deemed somewhat greater and more difficult,) to create men again, or renew them, being marred and deformed, unto the image of God, (quickening a man's spirit in a manner dead, enlightening his blind mind, reforming his perverse affections;) which to effect, as it is ascribed to God, so also to the Holy Spirit in places numberless. Also (which is connected with that) to justify a man, to remit sins, (not ministerially, but, which is proper to God, principally and absolutely;) for, 'ye are,' saith St. Paul, 'justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' To animate the church by his influence, to govern it by his power and guidance, to prescribe laws unto it, to set rulers over it, to dispense gifts and graces requisite for the building, propagation, and preservation thereof, are works of his, and together the most proper and principal works of divine power. To perform miracles, that is, works contrary or superior to the laws of nature, and therefore only congruous to God; the doing of which is peculiarly attributed to God's Spirit, particularly to raise the dead, which is the highest of miracles; 'If,' saith St. Paul, 'he that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' In fine, there is no work, either of nature, or of providence, or of grace, so sublime, or so difficult, which is not ascribed to the efficacy of the Holy Spirit; the which doth show his sovereign authority and his almighty power: for surely by no more plain and cogent arguments, than by these, can the omnipotence of the supreme Deity itself be demonstrated.

4. The divine majesty of the Holy Spirit may also be asserted from the divine worship which is duly to be yielded to him. It by God's appointment is yielded to him, when being solemnly baptised in his name we do profess to place our faith and hope on him, we do protest our reverence and obedience to him. The same is then exhibited, when, according to the rule

of St. Paul, together with the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God the Father, we implore the communion of the Holy Spirit. The same is not obscurely signified whenever (that which often occurs) in the execution of divine (most excellent and admirable) offices and works the Holy Ghost is put in conjunction and co-ordination with the Father and the Son: for that by God, most jealous and curious, as it were, of his honor, (who more than once professeth that he will not 'impart his glory to another,') should be allowed to any creature, to march in even rank, to seem advanced to an equal pitch of dignity with himself, is nowise credible, or agreeable to reason. ('What communion can there be between a creature and his Creator? Why should that which is made be numbered together with his Maker, in the performing of all things?' saith St. Athanasius well.) Moreover, what dignity belongs to the Holy Spirit, what reverence is due to him, appears clearly from that the blasphemy against him is peculiarly unpardonable, whenas the faults committed against God the Father, and obloquy against the Son, are capable of remission: for the nature of things doth scarce bear, that to detract from a creature should be a crime so capital, or receive such aggravation; it cannot well be conceived that the honor of a creature should in such a manner be preferred to the honor of God himself. ('How,' saith St. Ambrose, 'can any one dare to reckon the Holy Ghost among creatures? or who doth so render himself obnoxious, that if he derogate from a creature, he may not suppose it to be relaxable to him by some pardon?'

5. Again, whereas Christ, even as a man, is elevated in dignity and eminence above all creatures, ('above every name, far above all principality, authority, and power,' as the Apostle teaches us,) he is yet in that respect inferior, and gives place to the Holy Spirit. For as such he did receive his nature from the Holy Spirit; 'That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,' saith the Evangelist; and, 'More honor than the house hath he that made it,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews. Christ was sent by the Holy Spirit; 'The Lord God,' saith the Prophet of him, 'and his Spirit hath sent me.' But, 'The Apostle,' saith he himself, 'is not greater than he that sent him;' the sent is not greater, that is, (by a λιτότης, or

μείωσις, the figure of diminution,) he is inferior to the sender. Christ was consecrated and inaugurated into his offices by the Holy Spirit; 'The Spirit of the Lord' (foretold Isaiah of Christ, as the Evangelists interpret) 'is on me, because he hath anointed me:' but, 'Without controversy, the lesser is blessed by the greater,' saith the Apostle. Christ was by the Holy Ghost endowed with excellent gifts abundantly and beyond measure; but, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' is an aphorism out of our Lord's own mouth: in fine, our Lord did by virtue of the Holy Spirit perform miracles; by the eternal Spirit he offered himself to God; by the Spirit he was raised from the dead: which things are manifest arguments that the Holy Spirit doth excel Christ as man: wherefore seeing beside God only, nothing is in worth or dignity superior to Christ, it necessarily follows that the Holy Spirit is God.

6. I add, that whereas on divers occasions the ranks and orders of creatures are mentioned in Scripture, (as where all the quire of them is summoned and cited to sing the praises of God; namely, the angels, the heavens, the earth, men, beasts, plants; when catalogues are recited of things made by Christ, and subject to him, among which angels, thrones, dominations, dignities, and powers are mentioned,) it is strange that this top of creatures, (if a creature he be,) this leader of the quire, should wholly be pretermitted. It is very probable that if the prophets had known, or the Apostles had thought this, they would not have been silent about it; they would, as reason had required, have set him in the head of all; which if they had done, they would have exempted us from these scruples and errors in so high a point: but they could not do it, because indeed the Holy Spirit is not in the order of creatures: the which we do seem sufficiently to have proved.

To all the premised points no small accession of weight doth come from the authority of so many holy fathers and councils; and from the consent of the Church, running down through so many ages; to oppose which, without very weighty and manifest reasons, doth as much recede from prudence, as it is far from modesty.

The next point we shall consider is the original of the Holy Spirit; the which we do assert to be in way of procession

jointly from God the Father and God the Son; meaning hereby, that to this divine Person in a peculiar manner (incomprehensible indeed, and ineffable, but which in some manner by this term *procession* may be signified) the divine essence which he hath is communicated from the Father and the Son.

That the Holy Spirit is not from himself, as the Father is, is plain; for that being supposed, there would be more first principles than one, and consequently more gods than one; which is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture; neither did any ever affirm so much.

That he proceedeth from the Father, appeareth from that the Father is the fountain and first principle of all essence; and by our Saviour the Spirit is said ἐκπορεύεσθαι, 'to go out from the Father;' and he is called τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'The Spirit that is out of God' (the Father) by St. Paul: and this is generally confessed.

That also he doth proceed from the Son (which is by the modern Greeks denied) may be proved.

1. Because as he is called the Spirit of the Father, so he is also often styled the Spirit of the Son; which signifies he is in a like manner related to the Son as to the Father; and that both therefore in a like manner conspire to his production.

2. He is said to be sent, as from the Father, so also from the Son. But mission and procession do not seem to differ, except in manner of speech, (one more especially denoting the name whence, the other the act or effect of the same thing;) nor doth it agree to the Holy Spirit, who (as we have showed) is God, to go out, or be sent, otherwise than by reception of essence.

3. The Son saith of the Holy Spirit, ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήψεται, 'He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you;' and, to the same purpose, 'Whatsoever he shall hear, he shall speak;' by which saying it is intimated that the Holy Spirit doth receive knowlege from the Son; the which, being God, he cannot otherwise do, than by receiving his essence from the Son.

4. The Holy Spirit is a Person third in order: seeing then the Son before him in order (in order, I say, not in time) obtaineth the divine nature, so that when the Holy Spirit doth proceed, it is common to both Father and Son, he cannot re-

ceive it from the Father separately, or without also deriving it from the Son. Thus our Lord himself seemeth to have argued, when he saith, 'All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.'

5. Lastly, our Saviour, as St. Augustine and Cyril conceive, did signify this procession from himself, when breathing on his disciples he said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'

6. To these arguments may be added the consentient authority of the Latin Fathers, Hilary, Ambrose, Austin, and the rest; which explicitly teach this doctrine. Also the more ancient Greeks, Athanasius, Basil, both the Gregories, Epiphanius, Cyrillus Alexandrinus, do (although seldom expressly in terms, yet equipollently, and according to sense) say the same.

We proceed now to the peculiar offices, functions, and operations of the Holy Spirit: many such there are in an especial manner attributed or appropriated to him; which, as they respect God, seem reducible to two general ones; the declarations of God's mind, and the execution of his will: as they are referred to man, (for in regard to other beings, the Scripture doth not so much consider what he performs, it not concerning us to know it,) are especially the producing in us all qualities and dispositions, the guiding and aiding us in all actions requisite or conducible to our eternal happiness and salvation: to which may be added the intercession between God and man, which jointly respecteth both.

I. First, it is his especial work to declare God's mind to us; whence he is styled the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of revelation; for that all supernatural light and wisdom have ever proceeded from him. He instructed all the prophets that have been since the world began to know, he enabled them to speak, the mind of God concerning things present and future. Holy men (that have taught men their duty, and led them in the way to bliss) were but his instruments, 'speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

By his inspiration the holy Scriptures (the most full and certain witness of God's mind, the law and testimony by which our life is to be directed and regulated) were conceived. 'He

guided the Apostles into all truth,' and by them instructed the world in the knowlege of God's gracious intentions toward mankind, and in all the holy mysteries of the gospel; 'That which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit:' 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,' saith St. Paul. All the knowlege we can pretend to in these things doth proceed merely from his revelation, doth wholly rely on his authority.

2. To him it especially belongs to execute the will of God, in matters transcending the ordinary power and course of nature. Whence he is called the power of the Most High, (that is, the substantial power and virtue of God,) the finger of God, (as by comparing the expressions of St. Matthew and St. Luke may appear;) and whatever eminent God hath designed, he is said to perform by him. By him he framed the world, and, as Job speaketh, 'garnished the heavens.' By him he governeth the world, so that all extraordinary works of providence, (when God beside the common law and usual course of nature doth interpose to do any thing,) all miraculous performances, are attributed to his energy. By him our Saviour, by him the Apostles, by him the Prophets are expressly said to perform their wonderful works; but especially by him,

3. God manages that great work, so earnestly designed by him, of our salvation; working in us all good disposition, capacifying us for salvation, directing and assisting us in all our actions tending thereto.

We naturally are void of those good dispositions in understanding, will, and affection, which are needful to render us acceptable to God, fit to serve and please him, capable of any favor from him, of any true happiness in ourselves: our minds naturally are blind, ignorant, stupid, giddy, and prone to error, especially in things supernatural, spiritual, and abstracted from ordinary sense: our wills are froward and stubborn, light and unstable, inclining to evil, and averse from what is truly good; our affections are very irregular, disorderly, and unsettled: to

remove which bad dispositions, (inconsistent with God's friendship and favor, driving us into sin and misery,) and to beget those contrary to them, the knowlege and belief of divine truth, a love of goodness and delight therein, a well composed, orderly, and steady frame of spirit, God in mercy doth grant to us the virtue of his Holy Spirit; who first opening our hearts, so as to let in and apprehend the light of divine truth, then by representation of proper arguments persuading our reason to embrace it, begetteth divine knowlege, wisdom, and faith in our minds, which is the work of illumination and instruction, the first part of his office respecting our salvation.

Then by continual impressions he bendeth our inclinations, and mollifieth our hearts, and tempereth our affections to a willing compliance with God's will, and a hearty complacence in that which is good and pleasing to God; so breeding all pious and virtuous inclinations in us, reverence toward God, charity to men, sobriety and purity as to ourselves, with the rest of those amiable and heavenly virtues of soul, which is the work of sanctification, another great part of his office.

Both these operations together (enlightening our minds, sanctifying our will and affections) do constitute and accomplish that work, which is styled the regeneration, renovation, vivification, new creation, resurrection of a man; the faculties of our souls being so improved, that we become, as it were, other men thereby; able and apt to do that for which before we were altogether indisposed and unfit.

He also directeth and governeth our actions, continually leading and moving us in the ways of obedience to God's holy will and law. As we live by him, (having a new spiritual life implanted in us,) so we 'walk by him,' are continually led and acted by his conduct and help. He reclaimeth us from error and sin; he supporteth and strengtheneth us in temptation; he adviseth and admonisheth, exciteth and encourageth us to all works of piety and virtue.

Particularly he guideth and quickeneth us in devotion, showing us what we should ask, raising in us holy desires and comfortable hopes, disposing us to approach unto God with fit dispositions of mind, love, and reverence, and humble confidence.

It is also a notable part of the Holy Spirit's office to com-

fort and sustain us, as in all our religious practice, so particularly in our doubts, difficulties, distresses, and afflictions; to beget joy, peace, and satisfaction in us, in all our performances, and in all our sufferings; whence the title of Comforter belongeth to him.

It is also another part thereof to assure us of God's gracious love and favor, and that we are his children; confirming in us the hopes of our everlasting inheritance. We, feeling ourselves to live spiritually by him, to love God and goodness, to thirst after righteousness, and to delight in pleasing God, are thereby raised to hope God loves and favors us; and that he, having by so authentic a seal ratified his word and promise, having already bestowed so sure a pledge, so precious an earnest, so plentiful first-fruits, will not fail to make good the remainder designed and promised us, of everlasting joy and bliss.

4. The Holy Ghost is also our intercessor with God; presenting our supplications, and procuring our good. He crieth in us, he pleadeth for us to God: whence he is peculiarly called παράκλητος, the Advocate; that is, one who is called in by his good word or countenance to aid him whose cause is to be examined, or petition to be considered.

5. To which things we may add, that the Holy Ghost bears the office of a soul to God's church, informing, enlivening, and actuating the whole body thereof; connecting and containing its members in spiritual union, harmony, order, peace, and safety; especially quickening the principal members (the governors and pastors) thereof; constituting them in their function, qualifying them for the discharge thereof, guiding and aiding them in it; 'Take heed,' said St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, 'unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers:' and, 'All these things worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he willeth.'

We have thus passed over the several main doctrines concerning the blessed Holy Spirit; the application of which to practice briefly should be this; the uses, which the consideration of these points may have, are these.

1. We are on the premises obliged to render all honor and adoration to the majesty of the divine Spirit.

2. The consideration of these things should work in us an humble affection and a devout thankfulness to God, for so inestimable a favor conferred on us, as is the presence and inhabitation, the counsel, conduct, and assistance of God's Holy Spirit in us. Him we gratefully must own and acknowlege as the Author of our spiritual life, of all good dispositions in us, of all good works performed by us, of all happiness that we are capable of; to him therefore we must humbly render all thanks and praise, assuming nothing to ourselves.

3. We should earnestly desire and pray for God's Spirit, the fountain of such excellent benefits, such graces, such gifts, such privileges, such joys and blessings inestimable. If we heartily invite him, if we fervently pray for him, he assuredly will come to us; for so our Lord hath promised, 'That our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them which ask it.'

4. We should endeavor to demean ourselves well toward the Holy Spirit; yielding to that heavenly guest, when he vouchsafeth to arrive, a ready entrance and a kind welcome into our hearts; entertaining him with all possible respect and observance; hearkening attentively to his holy suggestions, and carefully obeying him; not quenching the divine light, or the devout heat, which he kindleth in us; not resisting his kindly motions and suasions; not grieving or vexing him; that so with satisfaction he may continue and reside in us, to our infinite benefit and comfort. It should engage us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; that we may be fit temples for so holy and pure a Spirit to dwell in; lest he, by our impurities, be offended, loathe, and forsake us.

5. It is matter of comfort and encouragement, exceedingly needful and useful for us, to consider that we have such a guide and assistant in all our religious practice and spiritual warfare. If our lusts be strong, our temptations great, our enemies mighty, we need not be disheartened, having this all-wise and all-mighty friend to advise and help us: his grace is sufficient for us, against all the strength of hell, the flesh, and the world. Let our duty be never so hard, and our natural force never so weak, we shall be able to do all things by him that strengtheneth us; if we will but faithfully apply ourselves to his aid, we cannot fail of good success.

THUS far the Author's Sermons on the Creed. As to the remaining Articles, he hath only left a short Explication of them, like to that on the Lord's Prayer, &c. And there needed not much more, considering that the substance of these Articles had been treated of before: that of the Holy Catholic Church, and of the Communion of Saints, in his Discourse of the Unity of the Church, at the end of his Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy; and that of the Forgiveness of Sins, in his Sermons of Justification; and that of the Resurrection of the Body, in his Sermon of the Resurrection of Christ.

The Holy Catholic Church.

THIS article was, I conceive, adjoined or inserted here, on occasion of these many heresies and schisms, which from the beginning continually sprang up, to the danger of Christian doctrine, and disturbance of the church; the introducers thereof meaning thereby to secure the truth of religion, the authority of ecclesiastical discipline, the peace and unity of the church, by engaging men to disclaim any consent or conspiracy with any of those erroneous or contentious people, (who had devised new conceits, destructive or dangerous to the faith, against the general consent of Christians, or drave on troublesome factions, contrary to the common order, and prejudicial to the peace of the church.) Their meaning of this article therefore was, I take it, this: I believe, that is, I do adhere unto, (for belief, as we at first observed, is to be taken as the nature of the matter requireth,) or I am persuaded that I ought to adhere unto, that body of Christians which, diffused over the world, retains the faith which was taught, and the discipline which was settled, and the peace which was enjoined by our Lord and his disciples; I acknowlege the doctrines generally embraced by the churches founded and instructed by the Apostles; I am ready to observe the received customs and practices by them derived from apostolical institution; I submit to the laws and disciplines by lawful authority established in them; I do persist in charity, concord, and communion with them.

And that men anciently should be obliged to profess thus, there is ground both in reason and Scripture. In reason, there being no more proper or effectual argument to assure us that any doctrine is true, or practice warrantable; no means more proper to convince sectaries, deviating from truth or duty, than the consent of all churches, of whom (being so distant in place,

language, customs, humor; so independent, or coordinate in power) it is not imaginable that they should soon or easily conspire in forsaking the doctrines inculcated by the Apostles, or the practices instituted by them: it is the argument which Irenæus, Tertullian, and other defenders of Christian truth and peace do press; and it may in matters of this kind pass for a demonstration.

It hath also ground in Scripture; which as it foretels that pernicious heresies should be introduced; that 'many false prophets should arise, and seduce many;' that 'grievous wolves should come in, not sparing the flock;' that 'men should arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them;' as they warn us to take heed of such men, to reject and refuse heretics, to mark those which make divisions and scandals beside the doctrine which Christians had learnt, and to decline from them; to stand off from such men as do ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, that is, teach things different from apostolical doctrine, the doctrine according to godliness; as it enjoins us 'to hold fast the form of sound words heard from the Apostles;' 'to continue in the things which we have learned and been assured of, knowing of whom we learnt them;' 'to obey from the heart that form of doctrine into which we were delivered;' to keep the traditions as the Apostles delivered them to us; 'to stand fast, and hold the traditions which we were taught, whether by word or writing;' 'to strive earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;' as it enjoins us to walk orderly, to obey our guides, or rulers; to pursue peace, to maintain concord; to abide in charity with all good Christians; as it declareth heresies, factions, contentions, and separations to be the works of the flesh, proceeding from corrupt dispositions of soul, (pride, covetousness, vanity, rashness, instability, perverseness, craft, hypocrisy, want of conscience;) so it also describes the universality of them, who stick to the truth, and observe the law of Christ, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; to be one body, knit together, and compacted of parts, affording mutual aid and supply to its nourishment and welfare; joined to, and deriving life, motion, sense, from one Head; informed by one Spirit; as one house, built on the foundation of Prophets and Apos-

tles, Christ himself being the corner stone, in whom all the building is fitly framed and connected; as one family under one master; one city under one governor; one flock under one shepherd; one nation or people, subject to the same law and government, used to the same speech, custom, and conversation; lastly, as one church or congregation; for, as sometimes every particular assembly of Christians, and sometimes a larger collection of particular societies, combined together in one order, and under one government, are termed churches; so the whole aggregation of all particular churches, or of all Christian people, is frequently called the Church; even as the whole body of those who lived in the profession of obedience to the Jewish law, which was a type of the Christian church, is called קהל ἐκκλησία, 'the congregation.'

In relation to which society, these are the duties which we here profess ourselves obliged to, and in effect promise to observe:

1. That we do and will persist in the truth of Christian doctrine, delivered by our Saviour and his Apostles, attested unto by the general consent of all Christians; avoiding all novelties of opinion deviating from apostolical doctrine.

2. That we are obliged to maintain a hearty charity and good affection to all good Christians.

3. That we are bound to communicate with all good Christians, and all societies sincerely professing faith, charity, and obedience to our Lord; so as to join with them, as occasion shall be, in all offices of piety; to maintain good correspondence and concord with them.

4. That we should submit to the discipline and order, should preserve the peace, and endeavor the welfare of that part thereof, wherein we live: for what of good or harm is done to a member thereof, is also done to the whole.

5. That we should disavow and shun all factious combinations whatever, of persons corrupting the truth of Christian doctrine, or disturbing the peace of the church, or of any part thereof.

6. In fine, that we sincerely should wish in our hearts,

earnestly pray for, and by our best endeavors promote the peace and prosperity of the whole Catholic church; whereof we profess ourselves members and children; 'following,' as St. Paul directs, 'righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with those that call on our Lord with a pure heart.'

The Communion of Saints.

THESE words were not extant in any of the ancient Creeds, but were afterward inserted: nor, as I conceive, doth the meaning of them much differ from what was intended in the precedent article; and perhaps it was adjoined for interpretation thereof: for the meaning of them is, as I take it, that all the saints (that is, all Christians, either in legal presumption, or according to real disposition of heart, such) do, in effect, or should, according to obligation, communicate, partake, join together, consent, and agree in what concerneth saints, or members of the holy Catholic church; in believing and acknowleging the same heavenly truth; in performance of devotions or offices of piety with and for one another; in charitable good-will and affection toward one another; in affording mutual advices, assistances, and supplies toward the good (either spiritual or temporal) of each other; in condolency and compassion of each other's evils, in congratulation and complacency in each other's good; in minding the same thing for one another, and bearing one another's burdens; so that if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. This briefly seems to be the meaning of this point; and I need not to insist on clearing the truth, or showing the uses thereof; the doctrine so manifestly carrying its obligation and its use in the face thereof.

The Forgiveness of Sins.

THAT men are naturally apt to transgress the laws of God, and the dictates of reason; that so doing they incur guilt, and are exposed to vengeance, (from the great Patron of right and goodness, who is injured and dishonored thereby;) that hence they are subject to restless fears and stinging remorses of conscience; that they cannot be exempted from such obnoxiousness otherwise than by the free grace and mercy of God, nor be freed from such anxieties otherwise than by an assurance of pardon from him, are points to natural light sufficiently manifest.

Of such a disposition or will in God to remit offences, that all men have ever had a presumption, their application to him in religious practice doth show; (for no man would address himself in service to God, without a hope that God is reconcilable to him, and that his service therefore may be acceptable;) particularly that general practice of offering sacrifice for expiation of sin, and appeasing God's wrath, doth plainly declare the same.

But this was indeed but a presumption or conjecture, partly drawn from the necessity of their case, (which admitted no other remedy beside that hope,) and from man's nature, apt to presume that which most pleaseth; partly grounded on experience of God's forbearance to punish, and the continuance of his bounty toward men; on which grounds no man could build a full confidence that he should find mercy, much less could he be satisfied on what terms it would be granted, in what manner it should be dispensed, or how far it should extend; these things merely depending on the will of God, and the knowlege of them only on revelation from him.

The Jewish dispensation (which was particular and prepara-

tory to Christianity) did indeed appoint and accept expiations for some lesser faults, committed out of ignorance and infirmity; but it pretended not to justify from all things, nor on any terms did it promise remission of great sins wilfully committed, but threatened remediless excision for them, pronouncing dreadful imprecations, not only on the transgressors of some particular laws, but against all those who continued 'not in all things written in the law to do them:' so that the remission tendered by Moses was of a narrow extent, and could hardly exempt any man from obligation to punishment, and from fear thereof; although indeed (to prevent despair, and that which naturally follows thereon, a total neglect of duty) God was pleased by his prophets, among that people, occasionally to signify somewhat of farther grace (beyond what he was tied to by the terms of the covenant with that people) reserved for them, and that he was willing (on condition of hearty repentance and real amendment) to receive to mercy even those who had been guilty of the most heinous offences: but these discoveries, as they were special and extraordinary, so were they preparatory to the gospel, and dispensed on grounds only declared therein.

It is the gospel only which explicitly teacheth and tendereth remission of all sins; showing for what reasons, on what conditions, to what purposes, it is dispensed by God. It clearly and fully declares how God, in free mercy and pity toward us, (being all involved in sin and guilt, and lying under a condemnation to death and misery; all our works being unworthy of acceptance, all our sacrifices being unable in the least part to satisfy for our offences,) was pleased himself to provide an obedience worthy of his acceptance, and thoroughly pleasing to him, (in effect imputable to us, as performed by one of our kind and race, and for our sake willingly undertaken, according to his gracious pleasure,) to provide a sacrifice in nature so pure, in value so precious, as might be perfectly satisfactory for our offences; in regard to which obedience God is become reconciled, so as to open his arms of grace to mankind; in respect to which sacrifice he doth offer remission of sins to all men who shall on the terms propounded be willing to embrace it; namely, on condition of faith and repentance; that is, on sincerely professing the doctrine of Christ, and heartily resolving

to obey his laws. This is that great doctrine so peculiar to the gospel, from whence especially it hath its name, and is styled 'the word of grace:' this is that great blessing, which Zachariah, in his prophetical hymn, did praise God for; 'The giving knowlege of salvation to God's people in the remission of their sins, according to the tender mercies of our God; in which the dayspring from on high hath visited us:' this is the 'good tidings of great joy to all people,' which the angels did celebrate at our Saviour's birth: this is that main point, which our Lord especially charged his Apostles to declare and testify, 'that in his name repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations;' that 'God had exalted him to his right hand, as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins;' (to give repentance; that is, to give, as Clemens in his epistle well expoundeth it, *μετανοίας τόπον*, a place for repentance, in order to mercy; or that it should be acceptable and available for the remission of our sins, as all that on our part is required toward it;) all which points (together with the nature of this remission, its causes, its grounds, its ends, its conditions, its means, and way of conveyance) are admirably couched in those words of St. Paul; 'All men,' saith he, 'have sinned, and are come short of the glory of God: but we are justified freely by his grace, by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath proposed a propitiatory by faith in his blood, for the demonstration of his righteousness, toward the forgiveness of forepast offences.'

The consideration of which point is of exceedingly great use and influence.

1. It should engage us to admire the great goodness of God, and with grateful hearts to praise him for so great a favor: that God, being so grievously affronted and wronged by our sins, (loaded with extreme aggravations,) should be at such charge to purchase for us the means of pardon, should offer it so freely, should so earnestly invite and intreat us to accept it; how inexpressible a clemency doth it demonstrate! how great thankfulness doth it require from us!

2. It should beget in us an ardent love to God, answerable to that love which disposed him to bestow on us so inestimable a benefit. We should imitate the debtor in the gospel, 'who

most loved him who had forgiven him most;' and the good penitent, St. Magdalen, who, 'because much was forgiven her, did love much.'

3. It is matter and ground of hope and of comfort to us; (is preventive of despair and immoderate sadness;) for that our case cannot be so bad, but there is an assured remedy at hand, if we please to have recourse thereto, the mercy of God on our true repentance; whereby we infallibly shall obtain that happy state, of which it is said, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity.'

4. It is a great engagement to obedience; for that it greatly aggravates our disobedience, and endangers our estate. Having once from God's mercy obtained a cure and state of health, we by relapsing into sin do incur deeper guilt, and expose ourselves to greater hazard; 'Behold,' saith our Lord in like case, 'thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come on thee.'

5. Lastly, it shows us how much (in conformity to God and compliance with his will) we should bear with and forgive the offences or injuries done to us. You know how strongly our Lord, in the gospel, presseth the consideration of God's free pardon bestowed on us to this purpose; how he sets out the extreme unreasonableness and disingenuity of those who, notwithstanding this dealing of God with them, are hard-hearted and unmerciful toward their fellow-servants; how he threatens implacable severity toward them who do not from their hearts forgive to their brethren their trespasses; and promiseth remission of sins to them who (according to what they profess to do in their prayers) shall forgive to men the offences committed against them; making it not only an indispensable condition, but a sufficient means of obtaining the divine favor and mercy.

I shall only farther take notice, that although it be true that God in the gospel doth generally propound remission of sins (on account of our Lord's performances, and in his name) to all that truly repent and turn unto him, chiefly granting it on this consideration, and not withholding it from any, on a blameless default of other performances; yet he requires (and complying with his will therein is part of the duty which repentance dis-

poses to and is declared by) that (as well for public edification and the honor of his church, as for the comfort and advantage of persons concerned therein) this repentance should be solemnly declared and approved by the church; that this remission should be formally dispensed by the hands of God's ministers, being declared by express words, or ratified by certain seals, or signified by mysterious representations appointed by God. And to remission of sins, as thus dispensed, I doubt not but this article hath an especial reference; it being in St. Cyprian's form of profession at baptism expressed by, *Credo remissionem peccatorum in Ecclesia:* but because the church's remitting of sins thus is by virtue of that authority which Christ imparted to his church, called the Power of the Keys, I shall, on this occasion, here briefly explain the nature of that power.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

THIS power in part is founded on (and this name of it was wholly drawn from) those words of our Lord to St. Peter, 'And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Where that which our Lord doth promise to St. Peter (not to him personally, but, as the Fathers interpret it, representatively; he then signifying the church, and standing in the place of its governors; however not exclusively, for it) is by a parity of reason to be extended to all the Apostles, and after them to all the governors of the church; unto whom the same power is otherwhere in terms equivalent committed, and by whom it was exercised, as may appear from comparing the practice of the Apostles, and of the church in continual succession from them, with the nature or intent of this power; the which it is now our business very briefly to explain.

It is expressed in a metaphorical term; and it is therefore to be understood according to the analogy it beareth with the thing assumed to resemble it, as the nature of the object thereof doth require or admit. Wherefore it being the main property of a key, by opening, to give ingress and egress, (admittance into a place, or emission from it;) or by shutting, to exclude from entrance, or to detain within; this power may be supposed to imply a right or ability to perform such actions in reference to its object, which is the kingdom of heaven.

By the kingdom of heaven is understood the state of religion under the gospel, in distinction, as it seems, from the constitution and condition thereof under the Mosaical law. In the times of the law, God's law was in a manner terrestrial, he being king of the Jewish nation particularly, Jerusalem being his royal seat, and the temple his throne; where he was served with external and visible performances; where he expressly

promised earthly benefits and privileges, (long life and prosperity in the land of Canaan,) and threatened punishments answerable: but in the gospel God is worshipped universally, as resident in heaven, as requiring spiritual services addressed to heaven, as conferring rewards and inflicting penalties relating to the future state there. This state therefore aptly is called the kingdom of heaven, of which all Christians are subjects; the body of whom consequently may also be named the kingdom of heaven: (for the word kingdom sometimes denoteth the constitution of things in or under which a certain people do live, sometimes the people themselves.)

Now whereas this state hath two degrees, or the persons under it two conditions; one here present on earth, in transition and acquisition; the other hereafter, of residence and fruition in heaven; (one like that of the Israelites travelling in the wilderness, the other like their possession of Canaan;) in this case we may well understand both, but chiefly the first, (the kingdom of grace here,) wherein immediately this power is exerted, although its effects do finally refer and reach to the other, (the kingdom of glory hereafter.)

Let us then consider how this kingdom may be opened or shut by the governors of the church. This evidently may be performed several ways.

1. The kingdom of heaven may be opened by yielding real helps, inducing to enter into the church; it may be shut by the same means, inducing persons to continue within it. So by instruction, advice, persuasion, admonition, reproof; by affording fit means and occasions, by prescribing laws and rules conducing to those purposes, the governors are obliged to open and shut the kingdom of heaven: and the doing so therefore may be conceived an ingredient of this power.

2. The kingdom of heaven may be opened by intercession, or imprecation from God of fit dispositions qualifying persons to enter, together with a mind willing to do so. Thus, as all Christians in their way may open the kingdom, so particularly the governors, by their office and function, are obliged to do it, as the public mouths of the church. Wherefore St. Paul enjoins, that 'supplication be made for all men; because God would have all men to be saved,' and to have them come to

the knowlege of the truth; or would have all men brought into this kingdom.

3. The kingdom of heaven may be opened or shut by prudent discrimination of persons who are fit to be received into the church, (εὔθετοι εἰς βασιλείαν, well-disposed for the kingdom, as St. Luke speaks,) or who deserve to be rejected from it.

Thus the governors of the church do open and shut the kingdom, when they determine who shall be admitted to baptism, (which is, *Ecclesiæ janua*, and *porta gratiæ*, as St. Austin calls it,) and who shall be refused; they admitted, who appear competently instructed in Christian doctrine, and well resolved to obey it; they refused, who seem in those points ignorant or ill-resolved.

4. The kingdom of heaven may be opened or shut by judicial acts, whereby unworthy persons (whose conversation may be infectious, or whose continuance in the church may be infamous thereto) are excluded from it, or kept without; or whereby persons, on sufficient presumption of repentance and amendment, are restored to communion.

Thus considering the sense of the words with the nature of the matter, the power of the keys may be understood.

The same may be farther cleared by considering and explicating the phrases equivalent, by which it is expressed or interpreted. Such are especially binding and loosing, remitting and retaining sins.

By binding and loosing, our Lord himself interpreteth this power; 'I will,' saith he, 'give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' For understanding the sense of which phrases, we may consider that things or persons may be several ways bound and loosed.

1. Binding may denote any sort of determination, restriction, or detention imposed on persons and things; and loosing answerably may signify the contrary effects: so by just authority to command or prohibit a thing, (whereby its moral quality is determined, it is made good or bad,) is to bind that thing, and the persons subject to that authority. Also to

abrogate a law, or to dispense with its observation, is to loose the matter of that law, together with the persons concerned in it. Thus it is said that the Scribes, by prescribing many unprofitable observances, did bind heavy burdens on the people. Again likewise,

2. To interpret the sense of a law or doctrine is a kind of ligation or solution. It binds, by declaring what is commanded or prohibited, and consequently to what men are obliged; it looses, by showing what is permitted or remains indifferent, so leaving men to their freedom. *Quam vero clavem habebant Legis doctores, nisi interpretationem legis?* saith Tertullian. To bind and loose thus, doth plainly belong to the pastors of the church, they by office being the interpreters and teachers of God's law.

3. The exercise of any jurisdiction doth astringe the offender to punishment or satisfaction, or doth absolve him from them; it consequently may be called ligation or solution respectively.

4. The bringing persons under any contract is a tying them to performance thereof. Thus do the pastors of the church bind those whom they receive into the church at baptism, on undertaking the conditions of Christianity; and those whom after exclusion from Christian communion they absolve, on engagement to lead a better life.

5. The detention of a person in any state, or under any power, is called ligation; and a deliverance out of such a state or power, solution. So he that (by withholding means or assurance of pardon) is detained under the guilt of sin, is thereby bound; but he that hath the means and overtures of pardon conferred on him is loosed; and thus do the pastors of the church bind and loose, by retaining and remitting sin; the doing which is an instance of this power, expressly granted by our Lord; 'Whosesoever sins,' saith he, 'ye remit, they are remitted to them; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'

Now they may be understood to remit or retain sins divers ways.

1. They do remit sins *dispositivè*, by working in persons fit dispositions, on which remission of sins, by God's promise, is consequent; the dispositions of faith and repentance.

2. They remit (or retain sins) *declarativè*, as the ambassadors of God, in his name pronouncing the word of reconciliation to the penitent, and denouncing wrath to the obstinate in sin.

3. They remit sins *impetrativè*, obtaining pardon for sinners by their prayers, according to that of St. James: 'Is any man sick among you? let him call the elders of the church; and let them pray over him:' and, 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.'

4. They remit sins *dispensativè*, by consigning pardon in administration of the sacraments, especially in conferring baptism, whereby, duly administered and undertaken, all sins are washed away; and in the absolving of penitents, wherein grace is exhibited and ratified by imposition of hands, the which St. Paul calls χαρίζεσθαι, to bestow grace or favor on the penitent.

By considering all these things we may competently understand wherein this power of the keys doth consist. We might farther illustrate it by observing the exercise thereof by the Apostles, and in the primitive church; by viewing the practice of a like power under the law, which might perhaps be the rise and pattern hereof; by considering the necessity and usefulness of such a power: but I cannot insist on those particulars, but proceed to the next article.

The Resurrection of the Body, or Flesh.

THE doctrine of the immortality of the soul (whereby men are capable of rewards or punishments, according to their doings in this life) hath, in all religions, been deemed a necessary principle, and for such (as Cicero and Seneca expressly tell us) hath been embraced by all nations; having indeed, probably from original tradition, been conveyed over all the world. The same also divers philosophers (Socrates especially and his followers) did by natural reason strive to evince true. But tradition being too slippery, and reason too feeble thoroughly to persuade it, Christianity, by a clear and full proof, (of miraculous works and sensible experiments,) doth assure us of it; the certainty thereof we owe to his instruction, 'who brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.' It plainly shows that when we die, we do not (like brute beasts, or other natural bodies, when they appear dissolved) wholly perish; that our souls do not vanish into nothing, nor are resolved into invisible principles; but do return into God's hand, or into the place by him appointed for them, there continuing in that life which is proper to a soul. Neither only thus much doth it teach us concerning our state after this life, but it farther informs us that our bodies themselves shall be raised again out of their dust and corruption, that our souls shall be reunited to them, and that our persons shall be restored into their perfect integrity of nature; the bringing of which effects to pass, by divine power, is commonly called 'the resurrection of the dead,' or, 'from the dead,' (ἐκ νεκρῶν,) and simply the resurrection; as also, being raised, being reduced from the dead: sometimes also it is called the regeneration, (or iterated nativity,) and being born from the dead; which terms imply a respect to the body, and to the person of a man,

as constituted of body and soul: for the mere permanency of our souls in being and life could not (with any propriety or truth) be called a resurrection: that which never had fallen could not be said to be raised again; that which did never die could not be restored from death; nor could men be said to rise again, but in respect to that part which had fallen, or that state which had ceased to be. And as to be born at first doth signify the production and union of the parts essential to a man; so to be born again implies the restitution and reunion of the same; a man thereby becoming intirely the same person that he was before. The same is also signified in terms more formal and directly expressive; 'the quickening of the dead;' the 'vivification of our mortal bodies;' the 'redemption of our body;' the 'corruptible (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο, this very same corruptible body) putting on incorruption, and this mortal putting on immortality;' 'those who are in the graves hearing Christ's voice,' and 'proceeding forth to resurrection,' either of life or judgment; the 'awaking of them which sleep in the dust of the earth;' the sea, the death, the hell, (or universal grave,) resigning their dead; which expressions and the like occurring, do clearly and fully prove the reparation of our bodies, and their reunion to our souls, and our persons becoming in substance completely the same that we were. Which truth of all perhaps that Christianity revealed, as most new and strange, was the hardliest received, and found most opposition among heathens, especially philosophers; 'Hearing the resurrection of the dead, some of them mocked; others said, We will hear thee again of this matter:' so was St. Paul's discourse about this point entertained at Athens: they neglected or derided it, as a thing altogether impossible, or very improbable to happen; (as Pliny somewhere counts the revocation of the dead to life impossible to be performed, otherwhere calls it, *puerile deliramentum*, a childish dotage, to suppose it.) But why it should be deemed either impossible to divine power, or improbable on accounts of reason, no good argument can be assigned. To recollect the dispersed parts of a man's body, to range and dispose them into their due situation and order; to reduce them into a temper fit to discharge vital functions; to rejoin the soul to a body so restored; why should it be impossible or seem difficult

to him, who did first frame and temper our body out of the dust, and inspired the soul into it; to him, who out of mere confusion digested the whole world into so wonderful an order and harmony; to him, who into a dead lump of earth inserted such numberless varieties of life; who from seeds buried in the ground and corrupted there, doth cause so goodly plants to spring forth; who hath made all nature to subsist by continual vicissitudes of life and death; every morning in a manner, and every spring representing a general resurrection? (Well might the prophet Jeremiah say, 'Ah Lord God! thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee:' there is indeed nothing too hard for omniscient wisdom to contrive, for omnipotent strength to execute.) And what difficulties soever fancy may suggest, can we doubt of that being possible which experience attesteth done? Ezekiel saw dry bones rejointed, and reinspired with life; divers instances of dead persons restored to life are recorded in the prophetical writings; and more in the New Testament; but most remarkable is that passage at our Saviour's death, when it is said that 'many tombs were opened, and many bodies of saints that had departed rose, and coming out of the tombs, after our Saviour's resurrection, entered into the holy city, and did appear to many,' (or publicly to the many, τοῖς πολλοῖς;) which was a most full and manifest experiment of a miraculous resurrection, like to that which we believe: but of all, our Lord's own resurrection doth irrefragably confirm the possibility of our resurrection: so that St. Paul, with highest reason, might thus expostulate with the incredulous on this account; 'And if Christ be preached (or assured by testimony) that he rose from the dead, how say some that there is no resurrection of the dead?' that is, how can any man deny that to be possible which is so palpably exemplified?

Neither can the point be showed improbable or implausible; but it is rather very consonant to the reason of the thing; and good causes may be assigned why it should be. Man, according to original design and frame, doth consist of soul and body; these parts have a natural relation, an aptitude, and an appetite (as it seems) to cohabit and cooperate with each other;

many actions very proper to man's nature cannot be performed without their conjunction and concurrence; many capacities of joy and comfort (with their opposites) do result thence: the separation of them we see how unwilling, violent, and repugnant it is to nature; and we are taught that it is penal, and consequent on sin, and therefore cannot be good and perfect: wherefore it is no wonder that God designing to restore man to his ancient integrity, yea, to a higher perfection, rewarding him with all the felicity his nature is capable of, (on the one hand, I mean, as on the other hand justly to punish and afflict him according to his demerit,) should raise the body, and rejoin it to the soul, that it might contribute its natural subserviency to such enjoyments and sufferings respectively. Not to omit the congruity in justice, that the bodies themselves, which did communicate in works of obedience and holiness, or of disloyalty and profaneness, (which, in St. Paul's language, were either servants of righteousness unto sanctity, or slaves to impurity and iniquity,) should also partake in suitable recompenses; that the body which endured grievous hardships for righteousness should enjoy comfortable refreshments; or that those which did wallow in unlawful pleasures should undergo just afflictions.

Many other things might be said to this purpose; but I pass to the next point, annexed to this, as in nature, so in order here.

The Life Everlasting.

THE immediate consequent of the resurrection (common, as St. Paul expresseth, to just and unjust,) is, as we have it placed in the catalogue of fundamentals, set down by the Apostle to the Hebrews, κρίμα αἰώνιον, that judgment or doom, by which the eternal state of every person is determined; and accordingly every man must, as St. Paul says, 'bear the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or evil.' Now this state generally taken, (as respecting both the righteous and blessed, the wicked and cursed persons,) for that it doth suppose a perpetual duration in being and sense, may be called everlasting life; although life (as being commonly apprehended the principal good, and because all men naturally have a most strong desire to preserve it; with reference also, probably, to the law, wherein continuance of life is proposed as the main reward of obedience, is used to denote peculiarly the blessed state; and death (the most abominable and terrible thing to nature; the most extreme also of legal punishments threatened on the transgressors of the law) is also used to signify the condition of the damned: the resurrection of life, and resurrection of damnation; everlasting life and everlasting punishment being opposed; although, I say, life be thus commonly taken, (as also the resurrection itself, by an ἐφημισμὸς, is sometimes appropriated to the righteous,) yet the reason of the case requires that here we understand it generally, so as to comprehend both states; both being matters of faith equally necessary, and of like fundamental consequence; both yielding the highest encouragements to good practice, and determents from bad: for as on the one hand, what can more strongly excite us to the performance of our duty than an assurance of obtaining hereby so happy a state? what can more

efficaciously withdraw us from impiety than being certain thereby to lose and fall short of it? so on the other hand, what can more vehemently provoke us to obedience, than being persuaded that we shall thereby avoid eternal misery? what can more powerfully deter us from sin, than considering that by commission of it we shall expose ourselves to that wretched state? Infinitely stupid and obdurate we must be, if the consideration what these states are doth not produce these effects.

What is the state of life? it is a state of highest dignity and glory; of sweetest comfort and joy; of joy full in measure, pure in quality, perpetual in duration, in all respects perfect to the utmost capacity of our nature; wherein all our parts and faculties shall be raised to their highest pitch of perfection, our bodies shall become free from all corruptibility and decay, all weakness and disease, all grossness and unwieldiness, all deformity and defilement: for they shall, as St. Paul teaches us, be rendered incorruptible, strong, healthful, glorious, and spiritual: our souls also shall in their faculties be advanced, in their inclinations rectified, in their appetites satisfied; the understanding becoming full of light, clear and distinct in knowlege of truth, free from ignorance, doubt, and error; the will being steadily inclined to good, ready to comply with God's will, free from all weakness and all perverseness; our affections being set in right order and frame, with a constant regularity tending unto that which is really best, and taking a full delight therein: wherein we shall enjoy the blissful sight of God, smiling in love and favor on us; the presence of our gracious Redeemer, embracing us with most tender affection; the society of the holy angels, and of the just made perfect; whose company and conversation, how unconceivably sweet and delightful must it be! wherein nothing adverse or troublesome can befal us; no unpleasant or offensive object shall present itself to us; no want, or need of any thing shall appear; no care, or fear, or suspicion; no labor or toil, no sorrow or pain, no distaste or regret, no stir or contention, no listlessness or satiety shall be felt, or shall come near us; where God (as it is in the Apocalypse) will wipe every tear from the eyes, (of them who shall come there,) and death shall be no more; nor sorrow, nor clamor, nor pain any more: it is, in fine, a state in excellency surpass-

ing all words to express it, all thoughts to conceive it; of which the brightest splendors and the choicest pleasures here are but obscure shadows and faint resemblances; comparable to which no eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard any thing; nor hath it ascended into any heart of man to conceive the like; as St. Paul, out of the prophet Isaiah, telleth us: which state, seeing by a pious life we certainly do acquire a right unto, and shall enjoy a possession of; but from an impious life do forfeit all pretence thereto, and shall infallibly be deprived of it; are we not infinitely mad, are we not extremely enemies, and injurious to ourselves, if we do not embrace the one, and eschew the other?

Again; what is the other state, that of death? what but a state of lowest disgrace and ignominy; of utter shame and confusion; of intolerable pains and miseries, without any ease or respite, without any hope or remedy, without any cessation or end: wherein we shall not only for ever be secluded from God's presence and favor; not only be deprived of all rest, comfort, and joy; but detruded into utmost wretchedness: into a condition far more dark and dismal, more forlorn and disconsolate, than we can imagine; which not the sharpest pain of body, nor the bitterest anxiety of mind, which any of us hath ever felt, can in any measure represent; wherein our bodies shall be afflicted continually by a sulphureous flame, not only scorching the skin, but piercing the inmost sinews; our souls shall incessantly be gnawed on by a worm, (the worm of bitter remorse for our wretched perverseness and folly; the worm of horrid despair ever to get out of that sad estate;) under which unexpressible vexations, always enduring pangs of death, always in sense and in desire dying, we shall never be able to die: which miserable state, since it is by performing our duty surely avoided, since by neglecting or transgressing God's laws it is inevitably incurred; if we do not accordingly choose to demean ourselves, how infinitely careless are we of our own good, how desperately bent to our own ruin!

If these considerations make no impression on us, what can any reason effect? what can any words signify? how monstrously sottish or wild do we appear to be! I conclude with

prayer to Almighty God, that, according to his infinite mercy, he, by his gracious assistance leading us in the ways of piety and righteousness, would bring us to everlasting life and happiness; that he by the same powerful grace withdrawing us from impiety and iniquity, would rescue us from eternal death and misery: 'To him, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be for ever all glory and praise.' Amen.

A

BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF

THE CREED,

THE

LORD'S PRAYER,*

AND

THE DECALOGUE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Orat. Domin.

* Si per omnia precationum sanctarum verba discurras, quantum existimo nihil invenies, quod non ista Dominica contineat et concludat oratio: unde liberum est aliis atque aliis verbis, eadem tamen in orando dicere, sed non debet esse liberum alia dicere.—*Aug. ad Probam Epist.* cxxi.

SUMMARY OF

AN EXPOSITION ON THE CREED.

THIS Creed comprehends the main principles of the Christian religion, by which our practice is to be regulated. Brief observations on the other expositions introduced.

Usage of *the Creed* in the primitive churches: Apostolical authority of it, as drawn from the fountains of Scripture, shown. Meaning of the ancient expression for it, or the word *symbolum*. As for the subject itself, it is a short system of Christian doctrine, suited for every person to declare his consent thereto. Interpretation of the word *Creed*, or *Belief*. *Belief* has too acceptations; one more general and popular, another more restrained and artificial: these explained. The first of them considered as that which we profess in our Creed. Reasons for this given.

The various expressions in the Creed commented on. 1. The whole clause, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth*, illustrated; it being considered, 1. what it is that we are to believe; 2. why, and on what grounds we should believe it. First, the true notion of God, according to his glorious attributes, is pointed out as the object of our belief. Secondly, the real existence of such a Being is proved, 1. from natural effects observable by every man in the formation of all things; 2. by the general consent of mankind, that unanimous testimony of all people and nations not disagreeing in this only point; 3. by the discovery of a divine power, in works that cannot be ascribed to any other cause,

visible or natural; 4. by every man's particular experience concerning a Divine Providence.

Arguments drawn from the preceding observations, to show the eternity of God, the indefectibility of his existence, his omnipresence, his justice and veracity, his rightful sovereignty and dominion, &c. The constitution of our own souls also tends to confirm divers attributes of God.

In the next place, it is observed that in this article the unity of God is implied: this unity expressed in other ancient Creeds: with it the common suffrage of mankind is shown to agree: the same truth also declared by divine revelation.

It was anciently objected by Celsus and other adversaries of our religion, that Christianity exacted of men a blind groundless belief; that it condemned human wisdom, banished understanding, and prohibited all inquiry, &c. These objections answered; whilst it is shown that Christianity calls on men, or rather obliges them, to inquire into itself, though it will not allow a Christian to be so vain and inconsistent as to question any particular of its doctrine.

Now the first principle of Christianity is, *that there is one God:* the next, that God is perfectly veracious, or that whatever he asserts is true: thirdly, that God is the Author of the Christian doctrine in general: fourthly, that those authorities and traditions on which we ground and prove the particular doctrines of Christianity to be truly such, are proper and sufficient for the purpose.

These two latter principles, involving matter of fact, &c. require a rational probation: this given: and it is shown,

1. That it is reasonable to suppose that God should sometime reveal unto men the truth concerning himself, and concerning them, as they stand related to him.

2. That no other religion which hath been, or now is, could, or can, with any propriety pretend thus to have proceeded from God, or by him to have been designed for the general, com-

plete, and perpetual instruction and obligation of mankind. Paganism, Mahometanism, and Judaism, examined under this view of the subject.

It is next shown that the Christian doctrine is in all respects such as might become God as its Author; worthy of his wisdom and goodness to reveal, and impose on mankind: 1. if we regard the information it imparts to us of the nature and will of God, as far as is necessary for us to know them, &c.: 2. if we look to that concerning ourselves and the state of our souls; the nobleness of our original nature; and our present condition, &c.: 3. if we regard the rule of life which it prescribes to us, so agreeable to reason, and conducive to our good: 4. if we consider, not only the means which it shows, but the help and ability which it affords us, to practise that rule.

In addition to the foregoing abstracted considerations, it is shown that God hath, in every deed, asserted and attested to the Christian doctrine. The different passages in the Creed more closely examined and explained.

I believe in God the Father. The appellation of *God* here, not improperly taken; (as when it is attributed to creatures on some resemblance in nature or office which they bear to him;) but may be applied to God essentially considered: in this sense of the word the attribute of *Father* is shown, from many respects truly and properly to belong to him.

The consideration and belief of the grounds on which this relation of God to us is founded hath manifold good uses; is apt to inform us of, and to enforce on us, many necessary duties resulting from it: this shown. But God is also here to be understood, principally, as the first person in the blessed Trinity; as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: this partially shown: full proof left to another clause.

Almighty. Though all the divine perfections really and equally belong to each person of the blessed Trinity, yet they

are in some respects eminently attributed to the Father: this enlarged on.

The title or epithet παντοκράτωρ, which we render Almighty, explained and illustrated. Uses and importance of a belief in this truth.

Maker of Heaven and Earth. This clause stated to be one which was of later times inserted into this Creed: reasons assigned for it: explication of its terms. Disquisition on *matter*, as being, according to the opinions of some philosophers, eternal and uncreated. God shown to have been the Creator of it and all things. On the origin of evil. A few brief considerations concerning the manner how, and the reason why, God made the world; on which somewhat of our duty may be grounded, and our practice thereby directed.

Second division of the Creed. *Jesus.* This name not unusual among the Jews; imposed on our Saviour at his circumcision to denote his great design, the salvation of mankind: this fully shown. The several respects, in which he may be styled *our Saviour*, shown. 1. His conducting of us into and in the way of salvation. 2. His actual purchase of our salvation. 3. His communication to us of spiritual strength, &c. 4. His finally conferring on us, and crowning us with salvation. The love and gratitude, which this consideration should excite in us, briefly touched on.

Christ. This title or name imports office and dignity; the same with *Messias:* one in Greek, the other in Hebrew, signifying *The Anointed.* This topic enlarged on, and illustrated. Shown to involve the character of a prophet, of a king, and of a priest.

His only Son. That the Messias, designed by God to restore mankind, was in an especial manner to be 'The Son of God,' seems to have been a common persuasion of the ancient Jews before his appearance. And that our Saviour was indeed

so, the New Testament every where teaches us: this fully shown. Application of this point, to instruct and confirm us in our faith concerning the mystery of our redemption; to direct and heighten our devotion; to raise in us due gratitude towards God; to beget in us hope and comfort.

Our Lord. As the name of *God* is by a mysterious kind of peculiarity attributed to the *Father*, so is the name of *Lord* to the *Son*. Reasons for this peculiar appellation assigned. The general influence of this on our practice considered.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary. In the more ancient creeds this clause was thus expressed: *Qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine.* Reasons given for the alteration. The proposition and assertion of the following truths intended by this clause. 1. That our Saviour was conceived and born; that is, had a production agreeable to the nature of man, &c. 2. It being necessary that he should be consecrated to his great offices, and perfectly sanctified in his person, his conception was effected without any influence of man, only by the power of God, and operation of the Holy Ghost. 3. That the blessed Virgin Mary did by the Holy Ghost conceive, and bear, and bring him forth. His *being born* of her, first considered generally: next, the indication of these words, of his being born of a *woman*; born of a *Virgin*; born of *Mary*. The use of this point concerning our Saviour's birth considered. Next to his incarnation succeeds his passion.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead—. This part of our Saviour's humiliation is in the ancient Creeds expressed more concisely thus: *crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato, et sepultus*: reasons given for the alteration.

Suffered: that is, underwent judgment and punishment as a malefactor: this enlarged on. Reasons why this was so ordered, which may lead us to admire the wisdom and goodness

of God in this dispensation. Reasons given why it is added, *under Pontius Pilate.*

Crucified: whereby is expressed the manner and kind of our Saviour's passion. This kind of suffering considered, 1. as most bitter and painful: 2. as most ignominious and shameful: 3. as agreeable to the designs of his suffering: 4. as significant and emblematical: 5. as completing divine predictions, &c.

Lastly, the manner of our Saviour's suffering is considered, as apt to teach, affect, and admonish us.

Dead and buried, &c.; denoting the final completion of his punishment; concerning which is considered, 1. the nature of it, that it was a true and proper death, suitable to that frail and mortal nature which he took on himself for us: 2. some peculiar adjuncts and respects thereof, which commend it to our regard, and render it worthy of consideration: 3. the causes and ends whence and why he died, collected from the Scripture account: 4. the fruits and effects of it; lastly, the practical influences which the belief and consideration of this point should have on us.

Buried. He descended into hell. These two particulars appear anciently to have been joined and comprehended in the former of them. Reasons given for their separate existence. With regard to the first, it demonstrates the truth of his death, and the reality of his resurrection; &c. With respect to the second, which seems to have come from the Creed of Aquileia, it is a point of some obscurity, and has occasioned much debate. A threefold inquiry is here instituted, respecting, 1. the meaning of the words intended by those who inserted them; 2. concerning the most proper meaning of the words in themselves; 3. concerning the meaning which they are truly capable of in the case to which they are here applied. Various conceits respecting their signification enumerated, but without comment.

The third day he rose again from the dead. This is one of the principal articles, in its nature, its design, and its consequence; the faith of it being intended to produce or confirm faith in the rest; &c. 1. It serves to dignify and exalt his person, forming a striking contrast with the meanness of his birth, his life, and his death, &c. 2. It confirms our faith in the efficacy of his performances for us. 3. We may hence with good reason hope for aid sufficient to sanctify our hearts and lives. 4. It was also a most strong and proper argument to demonstrate the validity of his promises, and the truth of his doctrine, concerning the future state. *On the third day.* Reasons given why this expression was added.

He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. Previous observations on this clause: meaning of its parts explained. The ends and effects of our Saviour's ascension described; 1. that he might act as our priest and advocate, &c.: 2. that as a king he might govern, and protect us from our enemies, &c.: 3. that he might prepare a place for us: 4. that he might send the divine Spirit to us: 5. that he might bestow on us all good gifts and Christian graces: 6. that the love which God bears to piety and obedience might be eminently shown, to cherish our faith and hope, &c.

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. This is the last of those particular characters, whereby the Son of God is described; and it contains a most eminent office peculiar to him, implying the manner, and also the extent of it. This shown in all its parts to be very influential on our practice. 1. *Shall judge:* the anticipation of this judgment dilated on. 2. Consideration of the Judge himself: *he shall come to judge. He,* that is, *he,* the Son of God and Son of man, that was born, and died, and did and suffered so much for us: these points enlarged on. The due consideration of them shown to be necessary and profitable, on many accounts: 1. to preserve us

from disbelief and repining at God's providence, &c.: 2. to keep us from rash censure and invasion of our Lord's office: 3. to support us against unjust and uncharitable censures: 4. to render us sincere, circumspect, diligent, &c.: 5. to render us vigilant and watchful: 6. to allay our violent passions by those great springs of action, fear and hope, &c.

I believe in the Holy Ghost. The whole Creed seeming to be only an enlargement of the faith and confession required at baptism, we now come to the third great branch thereof, wherein we profess our belief in the Holy Spirit of God. In this is considered the *quid* and the *quale*. First, the *quid*, or nature of the word *Spirit;* in which it is shown that the Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Ghost divine properties and perfections: 2. omnipotence: 3. the divine names and titles: 4. a coordinate dignity with the Father and the Son: 5. an essential union with them: 6. a personal distinction: 7. a common essence derived from them. Secondly, the *quale;* in which is shown the peculiar character, offices, and operations of the Holy Spirit. These are, 1. to declare God's mind, imparting to men supernatural light and instruction: 2. to execute his will: 3. to work in us those good dispositions and qualities, of which we are by nature void. 4. To comfort and sustain us, and to assure us of God's love and favor. Lastly, to intercede for us with God. The use and influence which these doctrines should have on our practice explained.

The holy Catholic Church. This clause, in more ancient forms, ran merely, *Holy Church;* and in some was not inserted. Reasons given for its introduction. Meaning of the word *belief*, as applicable to this clause, explained by *adhesion*. Obligations for our adhesion to the Holy Catholic Church stated; first, from the reason of the thing itself; secondly, from the grounds of Scripture. The uses or ends for which a belief and consideration of this point may serve, stated.

The Communion of Saints These words were not extant in

any of the ancient Creeds. Their meaning stated to be not much different from that of the preceding article: perhaps it was joined thereto, by way of interpretation: this point enlarged on.

Concerning the power of the keys. Reasons given for introducing this subject here. Previous observations on it, and the term itself. For the better understanding the nature and extent of this power, the following considerations are introduced. 1. Its name; this being metaphorical, implying the thing designed in its nature, or some chief property. 2. Its object, or correlative term, that is, *the kingdom of heaven;* which according to the New Testament is capable of two acceptions: these explained, &c. 3. The equivalent phrases by which it is expressed or explained. 4. The practice and exercise of this power, committed by our Saviour to his church, and to the Apostles as governors thereof. 5. The rise and institution of it. 6. Its necessity and usefulness.

The forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; the life everlasting. The natural proclivity of mankind to sin dilated on. Reasons for a general presumption that God would pardon sin on repentance, described. Yet this was not sufficient to satisfy men's minds; so that in fact their hope was groundless. These observations propounded as yielding an argument to show that the doctrine concerning *remission of sins* obtainable from God, is a fundamental point of all religion, and that yet, as to any solid ground, it is peculiar to Christianity: this point enlarged on: it is the free gift of grace; procured by Christ; but granted only on sincere repentance: the qualities of this necessary repentance stated and considered. Observations on the practical use and influence of this point of our belief.

The resurrection of the body. The expression in the Greek is *τῆς σαρκὸς, of the flesh,* which comes to the same thing. Universal prevalence of the opinion concerning the immortality

of the soul: for the certainty of this knowlege we are indebted to Christianity alone, and to his instruction, *who brought life and immortality to light.* Explanation of this doctrine illustrated from Scripture; glorified body that shall be raised.

Life everlasting. The immediate consequent of the resurrection, common to the just and unjust, is that judgment or doom, by which the eternal state of every person is determined. This state, generally taken, may be called *everlasting life;* though life is used peculiarly to denote the blessed state, as death is used to signify the horrible condition of the damned. Both states yield the highest encouragements to a good, and determents from a wicked life. The encouragements that may be drawn from a consideration of a glorious eternity, developed. Consideration also of the miseries and pains of an eternal state of damnation, as affording the greatest inducements to avoid sin. Concluding prayer.

AN

EXPOSITION ON THE CREED.

THE order prescribed to this exercise directs us to treat on, first, the Creed; secondly, The Lord's Prayer; thirdly, The Decalogue; fourthly, The Sacraments; fifthly, The Power of the Keys.

The first comprehends the main principles of our religion, (I mean the Christian, as distinguished from all other religions,) with especial respect to which our practice is also to be regulated. The second directs us in the principal duty of our religion, (and which procures grace and ability to perform the rest,) our devotion toward God, informing us concerning both the matter and manner thereof. The third is a compendious body, as it were, of law, according to which we are bound to order our practice and conversation, both toward God and man; containing the chief of those perpetual and immutable laws of God, to which our obedience is indispensably due; and unto which all other rules of moral duty are well reducible. The next place is fitly allotted to those positive ordinances, or mystical rites, instituted by God for the ornament and advantage of our religion; the which we are obliged with devotion and edification of ourselves to observe, and therefore should understand the signification and use of them. Lastly, because God hath ordained Christians (for mutual assistance and edification) to live in society together, and accordingly hath appointed differences of office and degree among them, assigning to each suitable privileges and duties, it is requisite we consider this point also, that we may know how to behave ourselves towards each other, as duty requires, respectively according to our stations in the church, or as members of that Christian society.

Such, in brief, may be the reason of the method prescribed to these discourses, the which, God willing, we purpose to follow.

1. *Concerning the Creed.*

That, in the primitive churches, those who being of age (after previous instruction, and some trial of their conversation) were received into intire communion of the church, and admitted to baptism, were required to make open profession of their being persuaded of the truth of Christianity, and their being resolved to live according thereto; and that this profession was made by way of answer to certain interrogatories propounded to them, is evident by frequent and obvious testimonies of the most ancient ecclesiastical writers; and St. Peter himself seems to allude to this custom, when he saith that baptism saves us, (conduces to our salvation,) as being ἐπερώτημα ἀγαθῆς συνειδήσεως, the stipulation, freely and sincerely, *bona fide*, or with a good conscience, made by us, then when we solemnly did yield our consent and promise to what the church, in God's behalf, did demand of us to believe and undertake. I conceive also that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews doth allude to the same practice when (chap. x. 22. 23.) he thus exhorts to perseverance; 'Having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water;' (that is, having received baptism;) 'let us hold fast the profession of our faith (that which we at our baptism did make) without wavering, (or declining from it;) for he that did promise is faithful:' God will be true to his part, and perform what he then promised of mercy and grace to us. (Some resemblance of which practice we have in that passage between Philip the deacon and the Ethiopian eunuch: where, after Philip had instructed the eunuch, the eunuch first speaks; 'Behold water; what hinders me from being baptised?' Philip answers, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, it is lawful:' the eunuch replies; 'I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God:' on which short confession of his faith he is baptised.) Now that this profession, (take it either for the action, or the entire *res gesta;* or for the form, or for the matter thereof; to all which indifferently, by metonymical schemes of speech, the same words are usually in such cases

applied,) that this profession, I say, was very anciently (in the Roman especially, and some other churches) called *symbolum*, appears by those remarkable words of Cyprian (the most ancient perhaps wherein this word is found applied to this matter) in his seventy-sixth Epistle *ad Magnum*, arguing against the validity of baptism administered by heretics and schismatics, (such as were the Novatians;) *Quod si aliquis illud opponit, ut dicat, eandem Novatianum legem tenere, quam Catholica Ecclesia teneat, eodem symbolo quo et nos baptizare, eundem nôsse Deum patrem, eundem filium Christum, eundem Spiritum Sanctum, ac propter hoc usurpare eam potestatem baptizandi posse, quod videatur in interrogatione baptismi a nobis non discrepare, sciat quisquis hoc opponendum putat, primum non esse unam nobis et schismaticis symboli legem, neque eandem interrogationem.* Where those expressions, *Eodem symbolo baptizare*, and *In interrogatione baptismi non discrepare;* as also, *Una symboli lex*, and *Eadem interrogatio*, do seem to mean the same thing: and in other later writers the same manner of speaking doth sometimes occur; as when Hilary thus prays; *Conserva hanc conscientiæ meæ vocem, ut quod in regenerationis meæ symbolo, baptizatus in Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu S. professus eum, semper obtineam:* where *regenerationis suæ symbolum* doth seem to import that contestation of his faith which he solemnly made at his baptism. Now the reason why this profession was so called may seem to be, for that it was a solemn signification of his embracing the doctrine and law of Christ; even as Aristotle calls words, *σύμβολα τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυλῇ παθημάτων*, the symbols or representations of the conceptions that are in the mind: this seems to be the most simple reason of this term being so used: but if the simplicity of this notion doth not satisfy, there is another very agreeable to the nature of the thing, not wanting the countenance of some good authority. The word *συμβάλλω* doth in the best Greek writers not uncommonly signify, to transact commerce, to make contract, to agree about any bargain or business; and the word *συμβόλαιον* (thence derived) doth, according to most common use, denote any contract or covenant made between two parties: now, that the stipulation made between a person by baptism initiated and received into Christianity, and God Almighty, (or the church

in his behalf,) may most appositely be called a covenant or contract, none, I suppose, will doubt; wherein we confess faith, and promise obedience; God vouchsafes present mercy, promises grace and future reward: and that the word σύμβολον should hence import thus much, we cannot much wonder, if we have observed how commonly words are wont to borrow signification from their kindred and neighbors: and thus Chrysologus plainly interprets the meaning of the word; *Placitum, vel pactum*, saith he, *quod lucri spes venientis continet vel futuri, symbolum nuncupari etiam contractu docemur humano; quod tamen symbolum inter duos firmat semper geminata conscriptio —inter Deum vero et homines symbolum fidei sola fide firmatur:* and commonly (in his sermons on this Creed) he styles it *pactum fidei.* Ruffinus indeed tells us, (and divers after him,) that the reason why this Creed was called *symbolum* or *indicium*, is, because it was devised as a mark to distinguish the genuine teachers of the Christian doctrine from such false teachers as did adulterate or corrupt it; or because it was a kind of military token, (a badge, as it were, or a watch-word,) by which the true friends of Christianity might be discriminated and discerned from the enemies thereof; *Symbolum tessera est et signaculum, quo inter fideles perfidosque secernitur.* But if we consider the brevity and simplicity of the ancient forms, unsuitable to such a design, it may seem more probable that it was intended, not so much to separate Christians from each other, as to distinguish them from all of other religions; or more simply, as we said, to be a mark, whereby the person converted to Christianity did signify, that he did sincerely embrace it, consenting to the capital doctrines thereof, and engaging obedience to its laws. Indeed afterward (when it was commonly observed that almost any kind of heretics, without evident repugnance to their particular opinions, could conform to those short and general forms, to exclude, or prevent compliance with them) occasion was taken to enlarge the ancient forms, or to frame new ones, (more full and explicit,) to be used, as formerly, at baptism. But (to leave farther consideration of the name, and to pursue what more concerns the thing) for the more ancient forms, wherein the forementioned profession was conceived, it seems that in several places

and times they did somewhat vary, receiving alteration and increase, according to the discretion of those who did preside in each church; the principal however and more substantial parts (which had especial direction and authority from the words and practice of our Saviour and his Apostles) being every where and at all times retained; (those, namely, which concerned the Persons of the holy Trinity, and the great promises of the gospel; remission of sins, to be ministered here by the church; and eternal life, to be conferred hereafter by God on those who had constantly believed and obeyed the gospel.) That in the more ancient times there was no one form, generally fixed and agreed on, (to omit other arguments that persuade it,) is hence probable, for that the most learned and generally knowing persons of those times, when in their apologies against disbelievers for Christianity, or in their assertions of its genuine principles and doctrines against misbelievers, they by the nature and sequel of their discourse are engaged to sum up the principal doctrines of our religion, they do not yet (as reason did require, and they could hardly have avoided doing, had there been any such constantly and universally settled or avowed form) allege any such; but rather from their own observation of the common sense agreed on, and in their own expression, set down those main doctrines, wherein the chief churches did consent; as may be seen by divers of them, especially by Tertullian, (the oldest of the Latins,) if we compare several places, wherein he delivers the rule of faith, (as he constantly calls it, that is, such a summary of Christian principles, by which the truth of doctrines concerning matters therein touched might be examined;) wherein, I say, he delivers such rules of faith, to the same purpose in sense, but in language somewhat different, yet never referring us to any standing and more authentic form. Among these forms, that which now passes under the title of the Apostles' Creed (about which we discourse) seems to have been peculiar to the Roman church, and that very anciently, (as to the chief articles thereof; for it appears that in process of time it hath been somewhat altered, especially by addition;) and because it had been used from such antiquity, that its original composition and use were not known, was presumed to have derived from the Apostles, the first planters of that

church, (as it was then usual to repute all immemorial customs to be deduced from apostolical tradition;) or possibly because the Roman church (as in common belief founded by the two great Apostles Peter and Paul,) was by way of excellency called 'the apostolical church;' and the succession of Roman bishops, *sedes apostolica:* so whatever belonged to that church, obtained the same denomination; and among the rest, the Roman symbol might for that reason be called *symbolum apostolicum;* that is, *symbolum Ecclesiæ apostolicæ.* For that it was compiled by joint advice, or by particular contributions of all the Apostles, is a conceit sustained by very weak grounds, and assailed by very strong objections: as, that a matter of so illustrious remarkableness, and of so great concernment, should be nowhere mentioned in the apostolic acts, nor by any authentic record attested; (and indeed had it been so testified, it must have attained canonical authority;) that it was not received by all churches; and that those which used the substance thereof, were so bold therewith as to alter and enlarge it, are considerations ordinarily objected thereto: but that which most effectually, to my seeming, doth render such original thereof altogether uncertain, (and doth amount almost to a demonstration against it; I mean against the truth, or, which is all one in matters of this nature, its certainty of being composed by the Apostles,) is that which I before intimated; viz. that the most ancient (and those the most inquisitive and best seen in such matters) were either wholly ignorant that such a form, pretending the Apostles for its authors, was extant, or did not accord to its pretence, or did not at all rely on the authenticalness thereof; otherwise (as I before urged) it is hardly possible that they should not have in most direct and express manner alleged it, and used its authority against those wild heretics who impugned some points thereof. Nothing can be more evident than such an argument (as it was more obvious than not to be taken notice of, so it) must needs carry a great strength and efficacy with it; and would have much more served their purpose, for convincing their adversaries, than a rule (of the same sense and import) collected from their own observation, and composed in their own expression; and that argument, which they so much insist on, drawn from the

common consent of the apostolic churches, could not have been more strongly enforced, (nor the ground thereof more clearly evidenced,) than by propounding the attestation of this form, if such an one there had been commonly received and acknowleged: and if they were ignorant or uncertain thereof, aftertimes could not be more skilful or sure in the point. I speak not this with intent to derogate from the reputation of this Creed, or to invalidate that authority, whereof it hath so long time stood possessed; for, as for the parts thereof, which were undoubtedly most ancient, the matter of them is so manifestly contained in the Scripture, and, supposing the truth of Christianity itself, they are so certain, that they need no other authority to support them, than what Christianity itself subsists on; and for other points afterwards added, they cannot, by virtue of being inserted there, pretend to apostolic authority, but for their establishment must insist on some other base. It is, in general, sufficient (that which we acknowlege) to beget a competent reverence thereto, that it was of so ancient use in the principal, and for long time (till ambition and avarice, and the consequences of general confusion, ignorance, corruption, overspreading the earth, did soil it) the fairest perhaps and most sober church in the world; that it was, I say, in so illustrious a place, so near the Apostles' time, made and used, (and might thence seem probably to derive from some of them,) may conciliate much respect thereto: but yet since it is not thoroughly certain that it was composed by any of them, nor hath obtained the same authority with their undoubted writings, whatever is therein contained must be explained according to and be proved by them; and cannot otherwise constrain our faith: and indeed divers authors of great credit acknowlege it to be collected out of the Scriptures; *Illa verba*, saith Augustin, *quæ audivistis* (speaking of this Creed) *per Scripturas sparsa sunt, et inde collecta, et ad unum redacta.* And another ancient writer: *De sacris omnino voluminibus quæ sunt credenda sumamus; de quorum fonte symboli ipsius series derivata consistit.** Its authority therefore will at the second hand prove apostolical, its matter being drawn from the fountains of apos-

* Paschasius de Sp. S. cap. 1.

tolical Scripture. But so much shall suffice, for preface, concerning the title and other extrinsecal adjuncts of the Creed. As for the subject itself, it is a short system of Christian doctrine; comprising the chief principles of Christianity, as distinct from all other religions, in a form (or manner of speech) suited for every singular person, thereby to declare his consent to that religion; which to do, as it is especially befitting at baptism, (when the person is solemnly admitted to the participation of the benefits and privileges of that religion; and should therefore reasonably be required to profess that he believes the truth thereof, and willingly undertakes to perform the conditions and duties belonging thereto,) so it cannot but be very convenient and useful at other times, and deserves to be a constant part of God's service; as both much tending to the honor of God, and conducing to private and public edification: we thereby glorify God, frequently confessing his truth, (the chief and highest points of his heavenly truth, by his goodness revealed unto us;) we remind ourselves of our duties and engagements to God; we satisfy the church of our perseverance, and encourage our brethren to persist in the faith of Christ.

As for the interpretation thereof, I shall not otherwise determine or limit its sense, than by endeavoring to declare what is true in itself, and agreeable to the meaning of the words, wherein each article is expressed; proving such truth by any kind of suitable arguments that offer themselves; such as either the reason of the thing, or plain testimony of holy Scripture, or general consent and tradition of the ancient churches, founded by the Apostles, do afford. Proving, I say; for the Creed itself, (as we before discoursed,) not being endued with highest authority to enforce its doctrine, it must be confirmed by such other grounds as may be proved more immediately valid, and efficacious to convince or produce faith in men's minds. For faith itself is not an arbitrary act, nor an effect of blind necessity; (we cannot believe what we please, nor can be compelled to believe any thing;) it is a result of judgment and choice, grounded on reason of some kind, after deliberation and debate concerning the matter. But more distinctly what the faith we profess to have, is, I will immediately inquire; addressing my-

self to the exposition of the first word, 'I believe,' or 'I believe in.' Before we proceed, we must remove a rub, which criticising on the phrase hath put in our way. They give us a distinction between, 'to believe a thing,' 'to believe a person,' and 'to believe on a thing or person:'* for example, taking God for the object, there is, they say, a difference between *credere Deum, credere Deo,* and *credere in Deum. Credere Deum* doth import simply to believe God to be; *credere Deo,* is to believe God's word or promise, (to esteem him veracious;) *credere in Deum,* is to have a confidence in God, as able and willing to do us good, (to rely on his mercy and favor; to hope for help, comfort, or reward from him: the which, after St. Augustin, the schoolmen account an act of charity or love toward God, as may be seen in that late excellent expositiou of the Creed;) and in this last sense would some understand the faith here professed, because of the phrase, 'I believe in:' but I briefly answer that this phrase being derived immediately from the Greek of the New Testament, and the Greek therein imitating the Old Testament Hebrew, we must interpret the meaning thereof according to its use there, as that may best agree with the reason of the thing, and the design of the Creed here. Now in the said Greek and Hebrew, πιστεύειν εἰς, (or πιστεύειν ἐν, or πιστεύειν ἐπὶ, which import the same,) and האמין ב, (*heemin be,*) are used to signify all kinds of faith, and are promiscuously applied to all kinds of objects: it is required, to believe not only in God and Christ, but in men also; in Moses, in the Prophets; as likewise in the works of God; in God's commandments; in the gospel. Whence in general it appears that to 'believe in' hath not necessarily or constantly such a determinate sense, as the forementioned distinguishers pretend, but is capable of various meanings, as the different matters to which it is applied do require: to believe in Moses, (for example,) was not to confide in his power or goodness, but to believe him God's prophet, and that his words were true; to believe in God's works, was to believe they came from God's power, and signified his providence over them; to believe in the commands of God, and the gospel of Christ, was

* It comes from Augustin, the father of scholastic distinctions.

to take them for rules of life, and to expect due reward according to the promises or threatenings in them respectively pronounced to obedience or disobedience: in a word, we may observe, (and there be instances innumerable to confirm the observation,) that, in the New Testament, πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστὸν, εἰς Κύριον, εἰς ὄνομα Κυρίου, and πιστεύειν τῷ Χριστῷ, τῷ Κυρίῳ, τῷ ὀνόματι Κυρίου, do indifferently bear the same sense, both signifying no more, than being persuaded that 'Jesus was the Christ the Son of God,' such as he declared himself, and the Apostles preached him to be. Since therefore the phrase in itself may admit various senses, we may (with most reason and probability) take it here, according to the nature and design of the Creed; which is to be a short comprehension of such verities, which we profess our assent unto: it hath, I say, been always taken (not directly for an exercise of our charity, or patience, or hope in God, or any other kind of devotion, but simply) for a confession of Christian principles and verities; and accordingly when I say, 'I believe in God Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth;' it is most proper so to understand my meaning, as if I had said, 'I believe there is one God; that he is Almighty; that he is Maker of heaven and earth:' and so of the rest: to confirm which interpretation, I shall only add, that anciently πιστεύειν εἰς was commonly applied to the Church, to the resurrection, to repentance, and remission of sins: many examples might be produced to that purpose: I shall only mention those words of Jerome; *Solenne est in lavacro post Trinitatis confessionem interrogare, Credis in sanctam ecclesiam?* Which expression, according to the Schoolmen's interpretation of 'believing in,' were not allowable.

So much for the general notion of belief; it is some kind of assent to the truths propounded in the Creed: but what kind particularly it is, that we may more clearly judge, we shall observe, that 'belief' hath two acceptions most considerable; one, more general and popular; the other, more restrained and artificial: in its greatest latitude, and according to most common use, (as also according to its origination, from πέπεισται, by which it should import the effect of persuasion,) thus, I say, it signifies generally, being well persuaded, or yielding a strong assent unto the truth of any proposition; ἡ σφοδρὰ ὑπόληψις, (so we

have it defined, agreeably to common use, in Aristotle's Topics;) that is, a vehement or strong opinion about a thing: and so it involves no formal respect to any particular kind of means or arguments productive of it; but may be begot by any means whatever. So we are said to believe what our sense represents, what good reason infers, what credible authority confirms unto us. Whence in rhetoric all sorts of probation (from what topic soever of reason deduced, on whatever attestation grounded) are called πίστεις, by a metonymy, because they are apt to beget a persuasion concerning the cause maintained, its being good or bad, true or false. But according to a more restrained and artificial acception, (artificial I call it, because it is peculiar to men of art, and invented by the school, to the purpose of distinguishing such assent or persuasion into several kinds, whereof they make belief in one kind distinct from those others which are grounded on experience, or apparence to sense; or on rational inference, according to which acception,) belief doth precisely denote that kind of assent, which is grounded merely on the authority (the dictate or testimony) of some person asserting, relating, or attesting to the truth of any matter propounded; the authority, I say, of some person: which implies two things; 1. That such a person hath, *de facto*, asserted or attested the matter; 2. That his qualifications be such, that his affirmation should in reason have an influence on our minds, and incline them to consent; for that he is both able to inform us rightly, and willing to do it; is so wise, that he doth know; and so just, that he will speak according to his knowlege, and no otherwise. And this authority (which by reason of the author's qualities mentioned is called credible; that is, such, as in some measure is apt in a well-disposed understanding to beget such an assent to the truth of what is deposed) is one kind of argument, (distinct from those which are drawn from experience, or from principles of reason, before known or admitted by us) whereby persuasion concerning the truth of any proposition (concerning either matter of fact, or any doctrine) is produced in our minds: and according to the degrees of our assurance, either concerning the fact, that the author doth indeed assert the matter; or concerning the person's qualifications, (rendering his authority credible,) are the degrees

of our belief proportioned; it is more strong and intense, or weak and remiss; we are confident or doubtful concerning the matter: if we plainly can perceive by our sense, or have great rational inducements to think, that such an assertion proceeds from such an author; and then by like evidence of experience or reason are moved to think him not liable himself to be deceived, nor disposed to deceive us, then we become strongly persuaded; believe firmly, in proportion to the validity of the said grounds.

It is now to be determined according to which of these two acceptions the belief we here profess is to be understood: and to my seeming, we should adequately mean, according to the first, the more general and vulgar notion: that, I say, we profess to be persuaded in our minds, concerning the truth of the propositions annexed, not implying our persuasion to be grounded on only one kind of reason, that drawn from authority; but rather involving all reasons proper and effectual for the persuasion of all the points jointly, or of each singly taken. In this notion I understand the word, for these reasons.

1. On a general consideration; because the ancient teachers of our religion, both as being themselves men not seen in subtility of speculation, nor versed in niceties of speech, (used by men of art and study,) and as designing chiefly to instruct the generality of men, (for the greatest part being simple and gross in conceits,) could not or would not use words otherwise than according to their most common and familiar acception. They did not employ *ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγους*, terms devised by human wisdom for extreme accuracy and distinction; but expressed their conceptions in the most vulgar and best understood language.

2. Because we find that *de facto* the word *πιστεύειν* is used by them (in Scripture, I mean) according to this general notion; that is, so as to signify indifferently all kind of persuasion, having regard to the particular ground thereof. Thomas would not believe that our Saviour was risen, except he discerned visible marks, distinguishing his person from others: he did so, and then believes: whereon our Saviour saith; 'Thou believest because thou hast seen: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed:' we see that faith may be

grounded on sense. And, 'If I do not the works of my Father,' saith our Saviour, 'believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.' Our Saviour requires them not to rely on his bare testimony concerning himself, but to consider rationally the quality of his works; and on that to ground their faith: which kind of persuasion seems grounded rather on principles of reason, than any authority. The devils, St. James tells us, do believe there is one God: how so? because they know it by experience, rather than on any relation or testimony given to them. And you know, 'He that comes to God must believe that he is;' that is, must be persuaded of God's existence, by arguments proper to enforce such assent. For I argue farther,

3. That the belief of the first and main article of this Creed, that there is a God, cannot be grounded only on authority; human authority cannot alone suffice to prove so great a point; and divine authority doth presuppose it: for how can we believe that God doth this or that; that he hath revealed his mind to us; that he teaches us so or so, before we believe that he is? The belief of the subject must precede the belief of any attribute or action belonging to it: the belief therefore of God's existence is properly grounded on other arguments beside authority. Yea, farther,

4. The belief of other main points, not expressed indeed, but understood and supposed as the foundation of our believing all the other articles thereof, doth depend on more than bare authority: as for instance, the belief of God's veracity, (taken most largely, as including his infallible wisdom, and his perfect sincerity or fidelity;) the truth of God's having actually revealed his mind to us by Jesus and his Apostles, and by all the prophets before; (or the truth of Christianity itself in gross, as also of ancient Judaism:) the truth of the holy Scriptures: the validity of general tradition and common consent of the Christian churches instructed by the Apostles, so far as they may conduce to the probation of any of these articles: these things, I say, we must be persuaded of, as grounds of our believing all the other articles, not immediately deducible from principles of reason: and yet none of these points can properly be grounded on mere authority; to prove God is veracious because he saith

so, or that revelation in general must be trusted from particular revelations, are *petitiones principii*, most inconclusive and ineffectual discourses. Spirits are to be tried, and revelations themselves are to be examined, before we can on their word believe any particular doctrine avouched by them: this must be performed by use of our senses and of our reasons; and therefore virtually and mediately the belief of whatever relies on such foundations doth depend on them, and not on bare authority.

5. I will add, lastly, that if we consider the manner how the faith of the first Christians was produced, we may perhaps also perceive that even their faith was not merely founded on authority, but relied partly on principles of reason, taking in the assistance and attestation of sense. They that beheld the sincerity and innocency of our Saviour's conversation; the extraordinary wisdom and majesty of his discourses; the excellent goodness and holiness of his doctrine; the incomparably great and glorious power discovered in his miraculous works, (withal comparing the ancient prophecies concerning such a person to come with the characters and circumstances of his person,) were by these considerations persuaded, not merely by his own testimony, that our Saviour himself did not so much insist on, but rather disclaimed it, as insufficient to beget faith; 'If I witness of myself, my witness is not true;' (not true; that is, not credible:) you were not obliged to accept my testimony as true, if it were not also accompanied with other convincing reasons. It was by such a syllogism as this that believers did then argue themselves into faith on our Saviour: He that is so qualified, (doth so live, so speak, so work; so admirably in himself, so agreeably to prophecies foregoing,) his pretences cannot reasonably be deemed false; it is just that we assent to his words: But we plainly see and experience Jesus to be so qualified, (so to live, to speak, to do:) Therefore it is just and reasonable we believe him. This kind of discourse did *de facto*, and of right it ought to produce faith in those who came under the influence of it: the being convinced by it was the virtue of faith, showing the ingenuity and discretion of those so wrought on; and the not being convinced so, was the fault for which unbelievers were liable to just condemnation; 'If I had not

come and spake to them, they had not had sin:' and, 'If I had not done the works among them, which never any other man did, they had not had sin:' that is, if my doctrine had not been very good, and my discourse very reasonable; if my works had not discovered abundance of divine grace and power attending them; had not both my words and works been very open and manifest to them; they had been excusable, as having no reasons cogent enough to persuade them; but now they deserve to be condemned for their unreasonable and perverse incredulity. And give me leave, by the way, to observe that by the like syllogism it is, that faith may (and perhaps in duty should) be produced even in us now: the major proposition is altogether the same: A person so qualified is credible; (this is a proposition of perpetual truth, evident to common sense, such as by all men of reason and ingenuity should be admitted: otherwise no message from heaven or testimony on earth could be received.) The minor, Jesus was a person so qualified, was indeed evident to the senses of those with whom he conversed, (to such as were not blinded with evil prejudice, and wilfully disposed to mistake;) and will now appear as true to those, who shall with due care consider the reasons by which it may be persuaded: that it is attested by so many, and in all respects so credible histories, yet extant and legible by us; confirmed by so clear, so general, so constant a tradition; maintained by so wonderful circumstances of Providence; in a word, that it is evidenced by so many and so illustrious proofs, that no matter of fact had ever the like, none ever could have greater, to assure it.

On these and such like premises I embrace the more plain and simple notion of the word belief; meaning, when I say I believe, that I am in my mind fully convinced and persuaded of the truth of the propositions hereafter expressed, (or implied;) not excluding any objects there contained under any formality, (either of being apparent to sense, or demonstrable by reason, or credible by any sort of testimony,) nor abstracting from any kind of reasons persuasive of their truth. I believe there is a God, the Creator of the world; that he is infallibly wise, and perfectly veracious; that he hath revealed his mind and will to mankind; as well for that good reason dic-

tates these things unto me, as that the best authorities avow them. I believe that 'Jesus is the Christ, and our Lord, and the Son of God,' because the holy Scriptures do plainly so teach, and apostolical tradition thereto consents: and in like manner of the rest.

[I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.]

WHAT the phrase 'I believe in' doth most properly here import, I did endeavor (the last time) somewhat to explain: I would have deduced some corollaries, and added some considerations preventive of mistake, and farther explicative of that matter, if my intention hereafter to endeavor greater brevity did permit: but for that cause I proceed to the objects of our belief: whereof in the first place, as is meet, and in the front, God is placed; the belief of whose existence is the foundation of all religion, the support of all virtue, the principal article in all the creeds of all the world. He that comes to God (whoever applies himself to any religious performance) must first of all be persuaded that God is; as the object of his devotion, and the rewarder of his obedience. For the explication of which we will consider, 1. What it is that we are to believe; 2. Why and on what grounds we should believe it.

For the first: that in the world there are beings imperceptible to our senses, much superior to us in knowlege and power, that can perform works above, and contrary to, the course of nature, and concerning themselves sometime to do so for the interests of mankind; for these qualifications and performances deserving extraordinary respect from us, hath been a constant opinion in all places and times: to which sort of beings some one general name hath been in all languages assigned, answering to that of God among us. Of such beings, that there is one, supreme and most excellent, incomparably surpassing in all those attributes of wisdom and power and goodness; from whom the rest, and all things beside, have derived their beings, do depend on, are sustained and governed by; the author, I say, of all being, and dispenser of

all good; to whom consequently supreme love, reverence, and obedience is due; hath been also the most general sense of the most ancient, most wise, and most noble nations among men; to whom therefore in a peculiar and eminent manner the title of God (and those which answer thereto) is appropriated: so that when the word is absolutely put, without any adjunct of limitation or diminution, he only is meant and understood: to which sometimes, for fuller declaration, are added the epithets of *Optimus*, *Maximus*, *Summus*, *Æternus*, *Omnipotens*, *Dominus*, and the like: the Best, the Greatest, the Most High, the Eternal, the Almighty, the Sovereign God. Thus, according to the common sense of mankind, is the word God understood; the notion thereof including especially these attributes and perfections of nature; supreme and incomprehensible wisdom, power, goodness, being the fountain and author, the upholder and governor of all things: and what is contracted with, or is consequent on these: namely, the most excellent manner of being and of activity, eternity and immortality, independency and immutability, immensity and omnipresence, spirituality and indivisibility, incessant energy of the most excellent life, intuitive understanding, absolute freedom of will, perfect holiness and purity, justice, sincerity, veracity; as also complete happiness, (self-enjoyment and self-sufficiency;) glorious majesty, sovereign right of dominion; to which highest veneration and intire obedience is due. In short, whatever our mind can conceive of good, excellent, and honorable, that in the most transcendent degree is, by the consent of mankind, comprehended in the notion of God, absolutely taken, or in the last sense forementioned.

Neither doth divine revelation commend any other notion thereof to us; but explains, amplifies, and confirms this; expressing more clearly and distinctly these attributes and perfections; with the manner of their being exerted, especially to our benefit; and determining our duty in relation to them.

Now that really such a being doth exist (that this main principle of religion is not a mere *postulatum*, or precarious supposition, which we must be beholden to any reasonable man for to grant us) I shall endeavor to prove briefly by three or four arguments, which are indeed of all most obvious and suitable to every capacity, (for they be not grounded on metaphysical

subtlety, nor need any depth of speculation to apprehend them; common sense and experience will suffice to discover their force,) and yet of all that have been produced, they seem to me most forcible. The first is drawn from natural effects observable by every man; a second, from the common opinions and practices of mankind from all antiquity; a third, from particular discoveries of such a divine power attested by history; a fourth, from every man's particular experience concerning a divine Providence. And,

1. I say, that natural effects do declare such a being, incomprehensibly wise, powerful and good, from whence this visible world did proceed, and by which it subsists and is conserved. That it is true, which the prophet Jeremiah saith, 'That he hath made the earth by his power, hath established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his discretion:' Jer. x. 12. It may be assumed for a principle, which common experience suggests to us, that matter of itself doth not run into any order, &c. if not now, then not yesterday, nor from eternity: it must therefore by some counsel be digested. There is not indeed any kind of natural effect, which either singly taken, or as it stands related to the public, may not reasonably be supposed to contain some argument of this truth: we do not indeed discern the use and tendency of each particular effect; but of many, they are so plain and palpable, that we have reason to suppose them of the rest: even as of a person, whom we do plainly perceive frequently to act very wisely, at other times, when we cannot discern the drift of his proceeding, we cannot but suppose that he hath some latent reason, some reach of policy, that we are not aware of: or as in an engine, consisting of many parts curiously compacted together, whereof we do perceive the general use, and apprehend how some parts conduce thereto, we have reason, although we either do not see them all, or cannot comprehend the immediate serviceableness of each, to think they all are some way or other subservient to the artist's designs. Such an agent is God, such an engine is this visible world: we can often discover evident marks of God's wisdom; some general uses of the world are very discernible, and how that many parts thereof do contribute to them, we may easily observe: and seeing the whole is compacted in a decent and constant order, we have reason to deem the like

of the rest. Our incapacity to discover all doth not argue defect, but excess of the maker's wisdom; not too little in itself, but too great perfection in the work, in respect of our capacity. The most to us observable piece of the universe is the earth, on which we dwell: which that it was designed for the accommodation of living creatures, that are on it, and principally of man, we cannot be ignorant or doubtful, if we be not so negligent or stupid, as to let pass unobserved those innumerable signs and arguments that show it: if we look on the frame of the animals themselves, what a number of admirable contrivances in each of them do appear for the sustenance, for the safety, for the pleasure, for the propagation, for grace and ornament, for all imaginable convenience, suitable to the kind, and station of each! If we look about them, what variety and abundance of convenient provisions offer themselves even to a careless view, answerable to all their needs, and all their desires! Wholesome and pleasant food, to maintain their life, yea, to gratify all their senses; fit shelter from offence, and safe refuge from dangers: all these things provided in sufficient plenty, and commodiously disposed, for such a vast number of creatures; not the least, most silly, weak, or contemptible creature, but we may see some care hath been had for its nourishment and comfort: what wonderful instincts are they endued with, for procuring and distinguishing of their food, for guarding themselves and their young from danger! But for man especially a most liberal provision hath been made, to supply all his needs; to please all his appetites; to exercise, with profit and satisfaction, all his faculties; to content (I might say) his utmost curiosity: all things about him do minister (or may do so, if he will use the natural powers and instruments given him) to his preservation, ease, and delight. The bowels of the earth yield him treasures of metals and minerals; quarries of stone and coal, serviceable to him for various uses. The vilest and commonest stones he treadeth on are not unprofitable. The surface of the earth, what variety of delicate fruits, herbs and grains doth it afford, to nourish our bodies, and cheer our spirits, and please our tastes, and remedy our diseases! how many fragrant flowers, most beautiful and goodly in color and shape, for the comfort of our smell and delight of our eyes! Neither can our ears complain, since

every wood hath a quire of natural musicians, to entertain them with their sprightful melody! Every wood did I say? yes too, the woods, adorned with stately trees, yield pleasant spectacles to our sight, shelter from offences of weather and sun, fuel for our fires, materials for our buildings, (our houses and shipping,) and other needful utensils. Even the barren mountains send us down fresh streams of water, so necessary for the support of our lives, so profitable for the fructification of our grounds, so commodious for conveyance and maintaining of intercourse among us. Even the wide seas themselves serve us many ways: they are commodious for our traffic and commerce: they supply the bottles of heaven with water to refresh the earth: they are inexhaustible cisterns, from whence our springs and rivers are derived: they yield stores of good fish, and other conveniences of life. The very rude and disorderly winds do us no little service, in brushing and cleansing the air for our health; in driving forward our ships; in scattering and spreading about the clouds, those clouds which drop fatness on our grounds, As for our subjects the animals, it is not possible to reckon the manifold utilities we receive from them: how many ways they supply our needs, with pleasant food and convenient clothing; how they ease our labor; and how they promote even our sport and recreation. And are we not, not only very stupid, but very ungrateful, if we do not discern abundance of wisdom and goodness in the contrivance and ordering of all these things, so as thus to conspire for our good? Is it not reasonable that we devoutly cry out with the Psalmist; 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches: so is the wide and great sea,' &c To say this grace with him; 'The eyes of all wait on thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season: thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing:' especially to say farther; 'Lord, what is man, that thou art so mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.'

Can any man, endued with common sense, imagine that such a body as any of us doth bear about him, so neatly composed, turned to so many purposes of action, furnished with so many goodly and proper organs; that eye, by which we reach the

stars, and in a moment have, as it were, all the world present to us; that ear, by which we so subtly distinguish the differences of sound, are sensible of so various harmony, have conveyed unto our minds the words and thoughts each of other; that tongue, by which we so readily imitate those vast diversities of voice and tune, by which we communicate our minds with such ease and advantage; that hand, by which we perform so many admirable works, and which serves instead of a thousand instruments and weapons unto us; to omit those inward springs of motion, life, sense, imagination, memory, passion, with so stupendous curiosity contrived: can any reasonable man, I say, conceive that so rare a piece, consisting of such parts, unexpressibly various, unconceivably curious, the want of any of which would discompose or destroy us; subservient to such excellent operations, incomparably surpassing all the works of the most exquisite art, that we could ever observe or conceive, be the product of blind chance; arise from fortuitous jumblings of matter; be effected without exceeding great wisdom, without most deep counsel and design? Might not the most excellent pieces of human artifice, the fairest structures, the finest pictures, the most useful engines, such as we are wont so much to admire and praise, much more easily happen to be without any skill or contrivance? If we cannot allow these rude and gross imitations of nature to come of themselves, but will presently, so soon as we see them, acknowlege them the products of art, though we know not the artist, nor did see him work; how much more reasonable is it, that we believe the works of nature, so much more fine and accurate, to proceed from the like cause, though invisible to us, and performing its workmanship by a secret hand? I am sure, the most diligent contemplators of nature, and those of the most incredulous temper, and freest from any prejudice favorable to religion, have not been able to deny that abundance of counsel and wisdom discovers itself in the works of nature: Aristotle (whom no man surely takes for superstitious or partial to the interests of religion) hath a whole chapter in his Physics to prove that nature works with design and for an end: and otherwere he affirms, ἡ φύσις ἕνεκα τῶν πάντα ποιεῖ, Nature doeth all things for some end: yea farther, Μᾶλλον δ' ἐστὶ τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἐν τοῖς τῆς φύσεως ἔργοις, ἢ ἐν τοῖς τῆς τέχνης: Tending to an end, and en-

deavoring what is best, is more observable in the works of nature, than in those of art. This he speaketh in his books *De Partibus Animalium*, the consideration of which extorted this confession from him: and if nature works so much for an end, there must be an understanding that intends it, and orders fit means for attaining it. Galen is observed in some places of his writings to speak somewhat irreligiously, yet in his books *De Usu Partium* he cannot forbear admiring the wisdom that shines forth in the structure of our bodies, breaking forth sometimes into hymns of praise and thankfulness to him that made it. The like expressions hath Cardan, such another not overdevout philosopher; and even our own countryman Mr. Hobbs, how little a friend he otherwise seems to religion, and how ready soever to deride those that by reason endeavor to prove there is a God, yet being overcome by the evidence of the thing, hath somewhere let fall these words: *Itaque*, saith he, *ad sensus procedo; satis habens si hujusmodi res attigero tantum, plenius autem tractandas aliis reliquero, qui si machinas omnes tum generationis tum nutritionis satis perspexerint, nec tamen eas a mente aliqua conditas, ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia viderint, ipsi profecto sine mente esse censendi sunt.*

Neither doth the force of this argument subsist here, but, as we intimated, the correspondence and relation of outward things to our needs, appetites, and capacities, doth mightily confirm it: if we had organs of nutrition, and nothing to feed them; senses, and nothing to prove or please them; hands and feet, without means or cause to use them, we might have some reason to think these things made causelessly and vainly: but it is, we see, altogether otherwise; all things are accommodated for us, so that we could not wish or conceive better. Which to them, who will not perversely dote, cannot but argue, not a wisdom only, but an exceeding benignity, careful and tender of our good.

Thus much the most common and obvious effects of nature here below, within us and about us, do signify to us: thus, as St. Paul preached, 'God hath not left himself unattested,' doing good, sending us from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness: nor do the heavens less declare the glory of God, and the firmament his handywork: he that shall consider with what regularity and what

constancy those vast bodies perform their rapid motions; what pleasure, comfort, and advantage their goodly light doth yield us; how necessary and profitable to us the vicissitudes of time and recourses of seasons are, which they make; how their influences conduce to the general welfare and preservation of things even here below, cannot but wonder, and wondering adore that beneficent wisdom and power, that hath disposed and still preserves them in such order. Could they without a wise hand, by a casual running together of atoms, or whatever senseless matter, be so ordered, as for six thousand years together to persist in the same places, and retain the same periods of time, in their motion, without any sensible alteration? He that can think it, may think any thing, and it were in vain to endeavor to confute him: how much more reasonable is that heathen philosopher, who thus speaks; *Esse præstantem aliquam, æternamque naturam et eam suspiciendam, adorandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi, ordoque rerum cœlestium cogit confiteri.**

But this argument is infinite and inexhaustible; as full and pregnant as is the world of creatures; each of which is a wonder, and proclaims the incomprehensible wisdom, power, and goodness of its Maker to us: we cannot without stopping our eyes exclude that light of divine glory, which fills and illustrates the world; without stopping our ears we cannot but hear that universal shout (that real harmony of the spheres) which all creatures in heaven and earth consent in utterance to his praise. Every star in heaven, every beast on earth, every plant, every mineral, yea every stone; some in a language very loud and express proclaim, others in a more still and low (yet to an attentive ear sufficiently audible and significant) strain do speak those most glorious properties of God; 'There is no speech or language, where their voice is not heard; their accent is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world,' as the Psalmist sings. The τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, as St. Paul speaks, the cognoscibility of God, is manifest in and by them: and the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and divinity, are perceived by observing the makes or constitutions of the creatures in the world; as St. Paul's words may be rendered, with which I conclude this argument.

* Cic. ii. de Divin.

2dly. That there is a God is proved by the general consent of mankind concerning it; by that *testimonium*, as Lactantius speaks, *populorum atque gentium in una hac re non dissidentium*;* that unanimous testimony of all people and nations not disagreeing in this only point. If the authority of some particular men, agreeing in vote, of one city, of one nation, doth pass for an argument, and shows the thing probable, how can we decline or contemn the common suffrage of mankind? He had need have a very clear and strong reason for it, who will dare to dissent from all the world. Hear Seneca thus discoursing; *Multum dare solemus præsumptioni omnium hominum; apud nos veritatis argumentum est, aliquid omnibus videri; tanquam Deos esse sic colligimus, quod omnibus de Diis opinio insita est; nec ulla gens usquam est adeo extra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat: Cum de animarum æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.*† That is, we are wont to attribute much to what all men presume; it is an argument with us of truth, that any thing seems true to all: as that there be gods, we hence collect, that all men have implanted in them an opinion concerning the gods: neither is there any nation so destitute of laws and manners, that it doth not believe there be some gods.

In like manner Cicero; *Itaque inter omnes omnium gentium sententia constat: omnibus enim innatum est, et in animo quasi insculptum, esse Deos: quales sint varium est, esse nemo negat;*‡ It is therefore an opinion manifest among all men of all nations, and, as it were, engraven in their minds, that there be Gods: how qualified they are, there is a difference; that they are, none denies.

Even Nelleius, the Epicurean, in his disputation against creation and providence,§ yet acknowleges there are gods, being compelled, as he saith, by this argument; *Cum enim non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firme consentio, intelligi necesse est esse Deos, quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus. De quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est; esse igitur Deos confitendum est,* &c.‖ For

* Lact. i. 2. † Epist. 117. ‡ De Nat. D. ii. p. 57. vid. p. 53.
§ De N. D. i. p. 22. ‖ Vid. Tuscul. Q. i. p. 299.

since, saith he, not by any institution or custom or law this opinion is established, and among all (not excepting one) a firm consent doth abide, it is necessary there should be gods; because we have implanted, or rather inbred opinions of them. But about whatever thing all men naturally agree, that must needs be true; therefore we must confess there be gods.

Aristotle: Πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν ὑπόληψιν, καὶ πάντες τὸν ἀνωτάτῳ τῷ θείῳ τόπον ἀποδιδόασι καὶ βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνες.* That is, All men have an opinion concerning the gods, and all men (both Barbarians and Greeks) do assign to the Divinity the highest place in the world, (viz. they believe his habitation to be in heaven.)

The author of the book *De Mundo*, (attributed to Aristotle, and dedicated to Alexander the Great;) Ἀρχαῖος μὲν οὖν τις λόγος καὶ πάτριός ἐστι, πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ὡς ἐκ Θεοῦ τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ Θεοῦ ἡμῖν συνέστηκεν. There is then indeed a certain ancient saying, and familiar to all men, 'That from God all things, and by God all things subsist unto us.'

I allege these authorities, selected from many others producible to the same purpose, from the wisest heathens, (that is, from witnesses in this cause most impartial and unsuspected,) not only to strengthen the argument, but to evidence the matter of fact on which it is grounded; to whose testimony all histories both ancient and modern do consent.

Nor doth the force of this discourse rely merely on the authority of mankind, thus consenting in opinion, (though that, as I said, is not contemptible,) but on a much more solid foundation; and that is, on the manner of this opinion, its being produced in men, and propagated. That men should so conspire must necessarily proceed either from that such an opinion was put into them by nature, (by way of natural notion or instinct, as the first most evident principles of science, and the most powerful instincts (after what is good) are supposed innate,) at least a very near disposition to entertain and embrace it; or that some very manifest and prevalent reason (obvious to all, even the most rude and barbarous) did beget this agreement in them; or that it was derived from some common tradition, some one common fountain of instruction to them. Be it which of

* De Cœlo, i. 3.

these ways it will, that this opinion became so universally instilled into men's minds, the argument carries great weight and validity. If nature either plainly forces men, or strongly inclines them to this persuasion, it is a vain extravagancy to oppose it; but if it came (as most probably to my seeming it did) from primitive tradition, it argues mankind to have proceeded from one stock, from some one or few men at first gathered together; of whose original who could be more credible witnesses than themselves? If they did testify and teach their posterity that they came from God, why should we disbelieve them? especially seeing whence else should they come? Who should form their bodies, who should infuse their reasons, who should instil this very notion into them, we cannot well imagine: of themselves they could not be, (what such thing as a man did we ever observe, or can we conceive, to spring up of itself?) nor is there any other cause here, to which (without great fondness) we can attribute their original. It is true that original tradition did by degrees over the world (by the devil's malice and man's infirmity or wickedness) degenerate into many shapes of polytheism and idolatry; but so was Judaism depraved by the scribes; and Christianity itself hath been much debased by a long course of bad times; yet who doubts but they both derived from one pure instruction; that of Moses, and this of Christ our Lord? It is very observable what Aristotle hath concerning this matter,* being spoken with so much judgment: It was delivered by our ancestors, saith he, and the ancients, being left in a fabulous dress to posterity, that these are Gods, and that a Divinity contains all nature: but other things concerning religion were fictitiously superinduced, for the inveigling of the vulgar, and for accommodation of laws, and the public utility. Hence they speak of them as of having human shape, or being like to other animals, and other things suitable to these, and agreeable to what is spoken; of which things, if we, making a separation, take only what was first delivered, that they thought the gods the first substances, he may suppose it divinely spoken: seeing it is probable every art and philosophy being invented, (as things would bear,) and afterward decayed, that such opinions as relics should be pre-

* Metaph. xii. 8.

served even until now. The opinion of our fathers, and that which was derived from the first man, is therefore only thus far manifest unto us. So Aristotle expressly.

To confirm which discourse, (and to prevent farther objections against it,) we may consider that (however perhaps among some very barbarous nations this tradition may have been almost worn out by time and men's stupid negligence) yet the most ancient histories (that of Moses especially, the far most ancient of all, and in this matter to no man incredible) do attest that this opinion was most universal, running in a most strong and clear current among the eastern people, the Chaldeans, Phenicians, and Egyptians; who that they were most ancient people, from whom the rest were propagated, the multitude of people, the antiquity of dominion, the use of letters, the rise of arts, the greater progress in all kind of civil culture, (all which things argue longer continuance in one place and state,) do plainly enough show; whose consent therefore doth involve that of all men beside, and confirms this general opinion to arise from the clear spring of our first parents' instruction. I might add, the same manner of worshipping God, (by invocation, by consulting him in way of oracle, by consecrating temples and altars, by vows and dedications, by sacrifices and oblations,) which likewise men did anciently agree in, doth also argue that all religion did proceed from one simple original institution, or instruction common to all mankind. But I cannot insist on and pursue every particularity.

A third argument of God's existence is from the discoveries of a divine power in works that cannot be ascribed to any other cause visible or natural. Such are the prediction and presignification of future events: (especially such as are contingent, and depend on man's free choice;) curing the sick of great chronical distempers without any medicinal applications, restoring limbs to persons maimed, sight to the blind, and raising the dead to life; (a thing which Pliny* deems impossible to God himself:) these and such like things all men will confess do surpass the power of any natural agent to effect, and are performable only by a cause whose power exceeds our comprehension. Now that such effects have been performed, we cannot deny,

* Lib. ii. c. 7.

without belying the most credible records of history that are extant; without accusing all ages, not only of extreme folly and weak credulity, but of notorious forgery and imposture; without derogating from the common credit of mankind, and rendering all testimony that can be yielded to matter of fact, ineffectual and insignificant; *Vetus opinio est* (saith Tully* concerning prediction of future events) *jam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque et populi Romani, et omnium gentium firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Græci* μαντικὴν *appellant, id est præsentionem, et scientiam rerum futurarum.*† There is an ancient opinion until now drawn even from the heroical times, (that is, from utmost antiquity,) that there is among men a certain divination which the Greeks call prophecy, (or inspiration,) that is, a presention and knowlege of future things; of which even the heathen story doth afford many instances, but the holy Scriptures most evident and eminent ones: such as that to Abraham concerning his children's sojourning and being afflicted four hundred years in Egypt; of the prophet (some hundred years before) concerning Josias; of Isaiah concerning Cyrus; of Jeremiah concerning the duration of the captivity; of Daniel concerning the revolutions of empire in the world, wherein the achievements of Alexander and his successors are so expressly described: and for miraculous works, although all nations have had so many of them performed among them, as to beget a common opinion that God did frequently interpose, so as to alter the course of nature, yet the holy Scriptures do most fully testify concerning them in great number, performed for the confirmation of divine truth and discovery of God's will to men, for the relief and encouragement of good, the discouragement and chastisement of bad men; which are the proper causes in all reason why they should be performed: and why that testimony should not be received, there can no good reason be assigned; why it should, there is very great reason; on which I did formerly touch, and cannot now stand to enlarge thereon: and indeed God's patefaction of himself to mankind, (his speaking to the fathers in many ways, and, lastly, to all the world by his Son, sent on purpose from heaven to reveal his designs of mercy and

* De Divin. init. † De Nat. ii. p. 54.

favor to mankind,) accompanied with so many prodigious miracles, and so many glorious circumstances of providence, visible to all the world, and so accommodated, as in the first place to beget this belief in us, is an argument that cannot but in all honest and well-disposed minds obtain effect. To this head belong those opinions and testimonies of mankind concerning apparitions, of which the ancient world (their poets and historians) spake so much, all which probably could not be devised without ground; concerning the power of enchantment, to which some invisible power must co-operate; concerning conjuration, witchery, all intercourse and confederacy with bad spirits; which he that supposes to be all mere delusion must somewhat over-rudely and immodestly suspect the world of exceeding vanity and credulity, many worthy historians of inconsiderateness, &c. most law-makers of great rashness and folly, most judicatories of indiscretion or cruelty, and too great a number of witnesses of extreme malice or madness; the truth and reality of which things being admitted, inferring the existence of invisible powers, (though inferior ones,) doth by consequence infer (at least confer much to) the belief of the divine existence, removing the chief obstacles of incredulity. But I cannot farther insist on this point.

4. The last argument I mentioned was divine Providence: which being of two sorts, (general, in the government of mankind; particular, in God's dealing with each single person,) although to him that will carefully attend and reflect on it, (that, to use the psalmist and the prophet's language, will 'regard the work of the Lord, and consider the operation of his hands,') even the general providence doth afford no small evidences of his existence; (he that shall observe the strange detections of mischief, both that which is designed, and that which hath been committed; the restraints, disappointments, and exemplary punishments of oppression and injustice, and all wickedness, (when it grows outrageous and exorbitant;) the supports, encouragements, and seasonable vindications (often by unexpected means) of innocence and goodness; the maintenance of such rules and orders in the world, that notwithstanding the irregularity and violence of men's passions, they commonly shift to live tolerably in peace and safety; the so many poor, weak, and helpless people (among so many crafty,

malicious, and greedy ones) being competently provided for; the reparations of good manners and piety being decayed and overborne by power and ill custom; these, I say, and other such occurrences in the world, he that shall consider wisely, may discern the hand of a wise and good Providence watching over human affairs;) but yet seeing commonly the reasons of God's proceedings with men here are various, mysterious, and secret; not to be distinctly apprehended by us, (who, for example, can certainly and easily distinguish between God's merciful patience toward bad men, and his gracious recompensing the good; between his just vengeance of one, and his paternal correction of the other; between his reclaiming one from vice, by either adverse or prosperous accidents, and his exercising the other's virtue by the like;) and because God's governance hath not its complete issue here, (this being not the only nor the chief place of reward or punishment,) therefore we cannot now with so clear evidence demonstrate the divine attributes from general providence; but are here forced by perverse antagonists to be sometime on the defensive; being sufficiently able in this point to defend ourselves, but not so able hence to convince such sturdy adversaries: it is only the children of wisdom here, that will justify her; therefore I wave that plea: but for particular providence, I dare appeal to most men, especially to those who have ever had any fear of God or sense of goodness, if sometime or other in their lives they have not in their needs (especially on their addresses to God) found help and comfort conveyed unto them by an indiscernible hand; if they have not, sometimes in an unaccountable manner, escaped grievous dangers; if they have not experienced, in performance of their duty and devotion toward God, a comfort extraordinary; if they cannot apply that of the psalmist to some events of their life; 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles; The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them: O taste and see that the Lord is good!' O taste and see: if God's goodness may be felt and seen by us, then is our own experience an argument of his existence: which indeed it is to all good men, (for whose comfort and confirmation I mention it;) though it is not likely to have much influence on those that have driven God's presence out of their souls; except they

have so much ingenuity as to believe others' testimony, who assert this great truth to them from their own inward conscience and experience.

I have insisted too long on this subject, it being so rich and copious, that I could not easily get out of it; nor can I much repent thereof, it being of so great consequence thoroughly to be persuaded of this point: the deeper and more strongly this foundation is laid, the more stable will the superstructure of religious practice be thereon; and I fear most of that coldness and imperfection which appears therein, doth arise chiefly from the weakness of our faith in this very article.

1. I shall only farther observe one or two particulars: first, that the preceding arguments, as they do most immediately evince those three principal attributes of God, his incomprehensible wisdom, power, and goodness; so, in conjunction with (or consequence from) them, they do declare those his other attributes, (which are ingredients also of that notion, which in the beginning of this discourse I described,) namely, the eternity and indefectibility of his existence; his immense omnipresence; his spirituality: as also his justice and veracity; his rightful sovereignty of dominion, and the like; (for I cannot prosecute all the divine perfections, according to that multiplicity of distinction which our conceit and expression doth make of them:) if God made all things, he could not receive being from another, (and he who made this world, what reason can we have to suppose him from another?) nor can any thing receive being of itself; nor from mere nothing of itself spring up into being: therefore the Maker of the world is eternal: something must be eternal, otherwise nothing could be at all; other things show themselves to have proceeded from the wisdom and goodness of one; that one therefore is eternal; and so all nations consent; and so revelation declares: that he is immortal and immutable, doth as plainly follow: for not depending for his being on any thing belonging to it, neither can he depend for his continuance or conservation: having superior power to all things, as having conferred to all whatever of power they have, nothing can make any prevalent impression on him, so as to destroy or alter any thing in him: from his making, and from his upholding, and from his governing all things, it follows that he was and is everywhere: where his

power is, there his hand must be: for nothing can act on what is distant; every action with effect requires a conjunction of the agent and patient: that he doth penetrate all things with his presence and power, operating insensibly and imperceptibly, doth argue the spirituality of his being; and that he doth not consist of such matter, as all the things we feel and perceive do: his overreaching wisdom argues him incapable of being deceived; and his overbearing power shows that he doth not need to deceive; and his transcendent goodness proves him unwilling to deceive or injure any: from whence is consequent his perfect veracity and justice. The excellency of his nature; the eminency of his wisdom and power; the excess of his goodness; and his having first given being, and then preserving it to all things, do declare his rightful title to supreme dominion; and accordingly that all love, esteem, worship, and obedience is due to him; according to that devout acknowlegement of the blessed elders in the Apocalypse; 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, (or authority:) because thou hast made all things, and for thy will they are and were created.'

I might add, that the constitution of our own souls doth show and confirm divers of God's attributes: it is not reasonable to think that our Maker made us to admire other qualities than such as are in him: therefore since we love and esteem and admire goodness, mercifulness, &c. and dislike the opposites; therefore God is in the highest degree good and gracious, &c.

I observe, secondly, that in this article the unity of God is implied, (the authors of the Creed thought it sufficiently signified by the singular number;) the which in other ancient creeds was expressed; *Orientis Ecclesiæ omnes ita tradunt*, saith Ruffin; *Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem*. All the churches of the east thus express it; 'I believe in one God, the Father Almighty.' So in Irenæus's creed it runs; *Ecclesia quaqua per universum orbem terrarum usque ad fines terræ dispersa ab Apostolis et ipsorum discipulis fidem accepit, quæ est in unum Deum omnipotentem, qui fecit cœlum, et terram, et maria, et omnia quæ in eis sunt.*

And in all Tertullian's forms;* *Regula quidem fidei una*

* De velandis virginibus.

omnino est, sola immobilis et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in unicum Deum omnipotentem, mundi conditorem.

Regula fidei; qua creditur unum omnino Deum esse, nec alium præter mundi conditorem: and in Irenæus and Tertullian's form, it is likewise expressed, as also in the Nicene Creed afterwards: and this is a main point of our belief, distinguishing us from Pagans and idolaters; who ascribed the incommunicable attributes of the one God, and imparted the religious veneration due only to him, under false deities, invented by themselves, or suggested by bad spirits; thereby greatly wronging God and themselves: robbing him of his due honor, and themselves of that protection and aid, which God is ready to impart to them who faithfully serve and humbly invoke him.

Now this truth the precedent arguments do also manifestly enough infer: the uniformity, concord, and perfect harmony which appears in the constitution and conservation of things; their conspiring to one end, their continuing in the same order and course, do plainly show it: even as the lasting peace of a commonwealth (composed of different persons and humors) argues one law, that regulates and contains them; and the orderly march of an army shows it managed by one conduct; and the uniformity of a house, or of a city, declares it contrived by one architect.

And thereto also the common suffrage of mankind doth in a manner agree: for that there was one supreme God, the author and governor of the rest, (and of all other things,) transcending in power and wisdom and all kind of perfection, was evidently the common opinion; whom therefore we see the poets do style, the Father of gods and men; the King of the gods; ὕψιστος, μέγιστος, κράτιστος; the highest, greatest, most excellent God.'

Even the vulgar had this conceit: but the wisest of them had more clear and full apprehensions of this unity; and commonly they speak of God, but as of one, whom he calls Πατέρα καὶ ποιητὴν: so Plato refers the making of the world to one: and Aristotle, when he hath occasion to speak of God, doth usually speak in the singular number; and so do other philosophers; and sometime expressly they signify their opinion to be, that there is but one. There are many popular gods, but

one natural, Antisthenes said in Tully:* *εἷς δὲ ὢν πολυώνυμός ἐστι*, saith the author *De Mundo*.† Being one in reality, he hath many names, according to the several affections he discovers, and the operations he exerts: whom Seneca thus consents to; *Quoties voles tibi licet aliter hunc auctorem rerum nostrarum compellare: tot appellationes ejus esse possunt, quot munera; hunc et liberum Patrem, et Herculem ac Mercurium nostri putant; sic hanc naturam voca, fatum, fortunam; omnia ejusdem Dei nomina sunt varie utentis sua potestate.*‡

But divine revelation doth most fully declare this truth: I need not mention places; the whole Scripture doth chiefly teach and inculcate it; That there is but one maker and one governor of the world; to whom all veneration and obedience is due: and to whom be all honor, and glory, and worship for ever ascribed and paid, &c. Amen.

It was anciently objected by Celsus, and other adversaries of our religion, that Christianity did exact of men a blind, groundless belief; that it condemned human wisdom, banished understanding, and prohibited all inquiry; commanding men to swallow its dictates without any previous examination or debate concerning the truth of them; imposing *νόμους ἀναποδείκτους*, laws uncapable of proof, and inculcating this rule, *μὴ ἐξέταζε, ἀλλὰ μόνον πίστευε*: Do not examine, but only believe.

The ground of this accusation seems to be a great mistake, proceeding from the not distinguishing that belief, whereby we embrace Christianity itself in general and in gross; and the belief, whereby we assent to the particular doctrines thereof, (especially such as concern matters supernatural, and above the reach of our understanding to find out or comprehend.)

As for the first, that faith, whereby we embrace Christianity in the gross, I say, that Christianity doth not propound itself as immediately evident, nor requires a precipitate assent to it; but offers blind reason for itself, and invites men to inquire, consider, and judge about its truth: never any religion was so little liable to this censure; none ever so freely exposed itself to a fair trial at the bar of reason: it desires of men an *εὐγνώμων ἐξέτασις*, a candid and discreet examination for its sake and

* 1. de N. D. † Cap. 7. ‡ De Benef. iv. 7.

their own: other religions have for their justification insisted on the example of ancestors, and custom of times; their large extent and prevalence among many people; their establishment by civil laws, and the countenance of secular power; (arguments extrinsic to the matter, and very weak in themselves,) declining all other test or trial of reason: and it is remarkable how Celsus* and those (who made the foresaid objection) did therein contradict themselves, when they affirm men ought, without scruple, to conform to the religion prescribed by the laws of their country, be they what they will, never so absurd or dishonest: this is indeed an exacting of irrational belief; a stifling of our understandings and muzzling our judgment; a requiring of men to yield their consent to innumerable most palpable falsehoods and inconsistencies. The teachers and defenders of Christianity proceeded otherwise: confiding in the truth and reasonableness of their cause, they excited men to lay aside all unreasonable prejudices; to use their best understandings; to apply themselves to an industrious and impartial search of the truth: hear Lactantius speaking for the rest; *Oportet in ea re maxime, in qua vitæ ratio versatur, sibi quemque confidere, suoque judicio ac propriis sensibus niti ad investigandam, et perpendendam veritatem, quam credentem alienis erroribus decipi tanquam ipsum rationis expertem: dedit omnibus Deus pro virili portione sapientiam, ut et inaudita investigare possent, et audita perpendere:*† that is; We ought especially, every one of us, in that matter, which chiefly concerns our life, to confide in ourselves; and rather with our own judgment and our proper senses strive to find out and weigh the truth, than, believing other men's errors, to be deceived as men void of reason: God hath given all men their share of wisdom, that they might both inquire into what they hear, and weigh it. So he disputing against the heathen credulity.

Thus doth Christianity call on men to inquire into itself; yea it obliges them thereto: it propounds faith as a virtue highly commendable, (supposing it therefore voluntary and managed with reason;) for all virtue is ἕξις προαιρετικὴ μετ' ἀληθοῦς λόγου, it is ἑκούσιος συγκατάθεσις, a voluntary assent, promising ample rewards thereto; and infidelity it propounds as a vice very

* Orig. v. p. 248, &c. † Lib. ii. c. 7.

blameable, (and consequently very irrational,) threatening very severe punishments thereto: it doth not inveigle men by sleight, nor compel them by force: but fairly persuades them to embrace it: it doth not therefore avoid examination, nor disclaim the use of good reason; but seeks and procures the one, cheerfully and confidently appeals to the other.

Indeed after it hath convinced men of its truth in general, having evidenced the truth and certainty of its fundamental principles, it then requires a full and cordial consent (without exception) to all its particular doctrines grounded on them: when, I say, it hath propounded sufficient reason to satisfy men's minds, that is grounded on most solid principles, it then requires men to surcease farther doubt or scruple concerning what it teaches: which is a most reasonable proceeding, and comformable to the method used in the strictest sciences: for the principles of any science being either demonstrated out of some higher science, or evidenced by fit examples and experiments to common sense, and being thence admitted, it is afterward unlawful and absurd to refuse the conclusions deduced from them: so it having been proved that our principles are true; (viz. that God is perfectly veracious; and that Christian religion did proceed from him, and is built on his attestation;) it is a part of absurd levity and self-contradiction then to question any particular proposition evidently contained therein: and in this sense it is true, (and thus I take those Christians to be understood who commend immediate faith, and exclude reason from being too busy in matters of religion, and discountenance curious inquiry;) thus, I say, it is true that Christianity engages us to believe, without reason or dispute. It will allow (yea it invites and exhorts) an infidel to consider and judge of its truth; but it will not allow a Christian to be so vain and inconstant, as to question any particular of its doctrine: by doing so he renounces his faith, at least ceases to be a steady Christian.

Now the first principle of Christianity (common thereto and all other religions) is, that there is one God: the next, (which also no religion doth not acknowlege,) that God is perfectly veracious; or, that whatever appears to be asserted or attested to by God is certainly true: which two principles we have already proved by reasons proper and sufficient, we con-

ceive, to satisfy any well-disposed mind. A third principle is, that God is the author of the Christian doctrine in general; that it hath been revealed and imposed on mankind by divine authority. And a fourth is, that those authorities and traditions on which we ground, and by which we prove, (mediately or immediately,) the particular doctrines of Christianity to be truly such, (that is, admitting the former principle to have come from God,) are proper and sufficient to that purpose. These two latter principles involving matter of fact, and consequently being not evident in themselves, do (for a full conviction of a man's mind, and producing therein a solid persuasion) require a rational probation; and that it may appear we believe like reasonable men, not on wilful resolution, or by mere chance, (as Pagans and Mahometans, and other ignorant opinionists do,) as also to confirm the grounds on which the subsequent articles or doctrines of faith are built, I shall endeavor briefly to show the reasonableness of them; beginning with the first, and advancing my discourse by several steps or degrees. And I observe, that,

1. It is reasonable to suppose that God should sometimes reveal unto men the truth concerning himself, and concerning them, as they stand related toward him; (his nature and will; our state and duty;) his prime attributes persuade thus much. It is most evident to common experience, that mankind, being left to itself, (in matters of this nature especially,) is very insufficient to direct itself; it is apt to lie under a woful ignorance; to be possessed with vain conceit; to wander in doubt, and fall into error: it is subject to all kind of delusion, which either the malice of wicked spirits, or the subtilty of naughty men, or the wildness of its own unruly passions and desires, can bring it under; and consequently it is liable to incur all those sins, (dishonorable, hurtful, and destructive to its nature,) and all those miseries, which from ignorance, error, and sin, do naturally spring; (an estrangement especially from God, and his grievous displeasure:) we see that not only the generality of mankind did sometime lie in this sad condition, but that even the most elevated and refined wits, those among men, who by all possible improvement of their reason did endeavor to raise and rescue themselves from the common ignorance, mistakes, superstitions, and follies of the world, could by no means, in

any good measure, attain their end: what did their diligent studies and inquiries produce, but dissatisfaction and perplexity of mind? wherein did their eager disputations conclude, but in irreconcilable differences of opinion, and greater uncertainty, than at first? most were plunged into a desperate scepticism; (a doubt and diffidence of all things;) none arrived higher, than some faint conjectures, or some unsteady opinions, concerning those matters of highest consequence: ἐμαραιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς: they were, as St. Paul observed, made vain (were frustrated and befooled) in their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darkened, &c. The world by wisdom did not know God: could not attain to a requisite measure of knowlege in divine things. This being the natural state of men, destitute of divine help and direction, doth it not, I pray, greatly need another light to guide it in this darkness, a helpful hand to relieve it from these inconveniences? Can then that infinite goodness hear mankind groan under so lamentable oppressions, and not pity it? Can he behold his own dear offspring, the flower of his creation, lying in so comfortless, so remediless a distress, without affording some relief? Can such a spectacle delight that gracious eye? or can he forbear long to remove it out of his sight? His goodness makes it highly improbable that he should: we account it great want of goodness, not to direct a bewildered traveller; not to relieve, if we can, a person greatly distressed. And if we, being bad, often perform such good offices to one another; how much more ready should we think him, that is goodness itself, to do the like, for all mankind so much needing it? His wisdom also gives us to suppose the same: if God made the world to express his goodness and manifest his glory, is it likely he should suffer himself to be utterly frustrated in his design, by letting men continue in ignorance and doubt concerning who it was that made it, and how he governs it? who but men can admire his excellent perfections, and render him his due honor; and how can they do it, without competent knowlege, and full persuasion concerning him? Doth not God expect duty and service from men? would he not have the world proceed in some good order? doth he not desire the good of men, and delight in their happiness? And then, being infinitely wise, must he not dispose fit means for accomplishing these ends? will he not provide, that himself be

not totally disappointed? So his wisdom grounds an argument for divine revelation: he had made an inward faculty of seeing in vain, if he had not given an outward light, &c. God's justice also doth in some manner persuade the same: doth not every good governor take care that his subjects should understand his pleasure, and be acquainted with his laws? doth he not propound fit encouragements to obedience; and deter them from disobedience by menacing punishment? and the sovereign Governor and Judge of the world, can he fail sufficiently to declare his will? will he leave any apology for disobedience? shall he neglect any means apt to promote his subjects' performance of their duty; fit to prevent the breach of his laws? If he loves righteousness, and desires to be duly obeyed, and delights in his subjects' good; he will surely discover his mind, and encourage men to comply with it, and terrify them from opposing it. Indeed that God should for a while connive at men's ignorance, and suffer them to grope after truth, (as St. Paul expresseth it in the 14th and 17th of the Acts,) to try them, as he did the Israelites in the wilderness, how they would behave themselves, in the using their talent of natural light; to make them sensible of their natural infirmity; more ready to embrace; more able to value the redress vouchsafed them; to commend his extraordinary grace and mercy to them; that for such purposes, unsearchable wholly by our shallow understanding, he should, I say, for some time forbear with a full evidence to declare all his mind, is not so strange or unlikely. I might add, that it is not likely God should suffer the world (his kingdom) perpetually to lie under the usurpation and tyranny of the devil, (καταδυναστεύεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου, Acts x. 38.) That his imperial throne should be possessed; his authority usurped; his name insulted and triumphed over, as it were, by that arch-rebel, and capital enemy of his; but that he should for ever suffer men to abide in such depth of ignorance, such perplexity of doubt, such captivity under sin and misery, seems not probable; and much less can it seem improbable that he hath done it: it cannot, I say, seem misbecoming the goodness, wisdom, or justice of God, that he should show them clearly, what he requires of them to do; what good he intends for them; what way leads to their hap-

piness; and how they should avoid misery. This consideration, though it doth not fully prove God hath made such revelation, (for we cannot reach the utmost of possibilities, nor are judges of what God must needs do,) yet it removes all obstruction to our belief, and disposes us to admit the following reasons: it being not unprobable, yea, in the reason of the thing, very probable, he should do it; we cannot wonder, and have less reason to distrust those arguments, by which it may appear that he hath done it.

2. We may consider that no other religion that hath been, or now is, could (or can) with any probability pretend thus to have proceeded from God, or by him to have been designed for the general, complete, and perpetual instruction and obligation of mankind. There have been but three pretensions thereto; that of Paganism, of Mahometanism, and of Judaism: let us a little examine each of them.

As for Paganism, it was never one simple or certain, one fixed or constant thing; but, according to difference of place and time, infinitely various and mutable: diversely shaped and modelled, according to fancy and humor, design or interest, of the state that allowed it, the priests that managed it, or the people that received it; a plain sign, that (excepting some general confuted notions, derived from ancient tradition) it did wholly proceed from human device, or some worse cause. Survey it all, and what shall you find, but a company of idle, ridiculous, ill-contrived, incredible, and inconsistent stories, arguing nothing of truth, and little of wit in them that invented them; these attended by practices most fond, lewd, and cruel, unworthy of human nature, contrary to common sense and honesty. Their worship directed to objects most improper: to the souls of dead men; (men famous for nothing so much as the vicious enormities of their lives, bloody cruelties, thefts, and rapines; murders and parricides; horrid lusts, adulteries, rapes, and incests; and such persons, alive or dead, what good or wise man would not rather detest and abominate, than respect or worship!) To brute beasts, and them the most vile and mischievous; (dogs, serpents, crocodiles;) which to pay devotion unto, what a debasement it is of human nature! To creatures inanimate; the stars and elements; rivers, trees, &c.;

which we see acting by a natural necessity; yielding no signification of any life, sense, or understanding in them, and consequently much inferior to us in dignity of nature; which therefore it is a sottish baseness in us to adore: yea, which is yet an extremer degree (if it may be) of folly, they dedicated temples and offered sacrifices to things void of all subsistence; to mere qualities and accidents of things; the passions of our minds, and the diseases of our body, and accidents of our lives: who would think men should be so mad as to reckon impudence, (that odious vice,) or a fever, (that tormenting disease,) or fortune, (that which we can so little trust, and so oft complain of,) among things venerable? and from such thorns, what fruits of good life and morality can we hope should spring? what piety towards God; what justice, truth, or goodness towards men; what sobriety or purity in men themselves can we expect should arise from such conceits and such practices in religion? none other, than such as St. Paul describes in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the second of the Epistle to the Ephesians; which history and experience show to have been no slanderous imputations on Gentilism. But it is needless to discourse against that, which I suppose hath no reasonable patron; and which hardly any wise man, when it was practised, did seriously think had any truth or reality in it; Plato often inveighs against the inventors of those fictions in heathen theology: Aristotle attributes the constitution of those religions to the policy of lawgivers: there was no philosopher, who did not signify his dislike or contempt of the vulgar opinions; that is, of their religion. What Tully saith of one part, the wiser sort of men did judge of all; *Tota res est inventa fallaciis aut ad quæstum, aut ad superstitionem, aut ad errorem:* the whole business was deceitfully forged either for gain, or out of superstition, or from mistake.

They did in their external carriage comply with common practice, out of politic discretion; for their safety, and for peace sake: but in their mind they believed nothing, nor liked any thing in it: they observed the common things, *tanquam legibus jussa, non tanquam diis grata,* (as commanded by the laws, not as acceptable to the gods,) as Seneca speaks.

I might add, that all these religions did vanish with the

countenance of authority and power that sustained them; which shows they had no root in the hearty belief or approbation of those that professed them. It is therefore plain that this religion did not proceed from God; but either from human device, or diabolical suggestion.

As for Mahometanism, a sect in later times sprung up and vastly spread about the world; neither can that fairly pretend to a divine original: in times of great disturbance and confusion in the world, (when even among Christians ignorance and dissension, superstition, and viciousness of manners had hugely prevailed,) in a very blind corner of the earth, among a crew of barbarous thieves and wild runagates, (such have those Arabians been always famed to be,) this sect did first arise; being accommodated to the genius of such people, and infused into them, partly by juggling pretences to wonder-working and prophecy, partly by seditious violence; by a person not, as their own legends describe him, of any honorable qualities; but having all the characters of an impostor, (rebellious and perfidious, inhuman and cruel, lewd and lascivious;) propagated it was afterwards by rage and terror of arms, and grew wholly among barbarous people, void of learning and civility; having no religion before, and therefore (as all mankind is naturally receptive of religious impressions) capable to admit any, especially such an one as this, agreeable to their savage humors and lusts; it subsists on the same grounds of ignorance and force, refusing all examination, and on extreme penalties prohibiting any dispute or controversy about its truth; being so far wise, as conscious to itself, that the letting in a little light, and a moderate liberty of discussing its pretences, would easily overthrow it. Even these exterior circumstances of its rise, growth, and continuance, (so full of iniquity and inhumanity,) are great presumptions against its divinity, or rather plainly demonstrate that it did not proceed from God; whose truth cannot need such courses, whose goodness abhors them: and if we look into it, we shall find it to be a lump of absurd opinions, odd stories, and uncouth ceremonies, compounded chiefly of the dregs of Christian heresies, with some ingredients of Judaism and Paganism, confusedly jumbled and tempered together: from Christian heresies it hath its negative doctrines,

opposite to Christianity; for allowing Christ much respect, it yet denies his being the Son of God, and his having really suffered; it rejects his true story, and affixes false ones on him; that God hath a body and a human shape, (Mahomet felt his hand forsooth, and it was very cold,) an opinion so unreasonable and misbeseeming God, he might draw from the Anthropomorphites; and from the Manichees that doctrine concerning the fatal determination of all events; a doctrine so prejudicial to religion, taking away those foundations of justice between God and man; man's free choice in serving God, and God's free disposal of rewards to men, suitable to their actions. The Jew contributed his ceremonies of circumcision, and purgations by washing; his abstinence from swine's flesh; his allowance of polygamy and divorce. I might add, that from him it borrowed its inhuman condemning, despising, and hating all the world; calling all men dogs, (beside themselves,) and adjuring all to certain damnation; affirming withal, that all of their belief, how wickedly soever they have lived, shall at length partake of salvation. The Pagan elysium might be a pattern, whence their paradise of corporeal delight and brutish sensuality might be transcribed; which any man sees how poor an encouragement it is, how unworthy a reward to virtue; yea, how much it rather detracts from and discourages all performances of honesty and reason. He must be very stupid, who can suffer himself to be persuaded that these conceits did come from the God of holiness and wisdom. And how Mahomet was inspired with truth, his stories alone would evince; stories patched out of old histories corrupted, mutilated, and transplaced, interlarded with fabulous legends; contrary to all probable records of history, (the persons, places, times, and all circumstances of which it most unskilfully confounds,) yea, repugnant to the nature of things, and to all imaginable possibility; evident arguments both of an ignorant and impudent impostor: he that will lie or blunder about matters of fact, who can trust him in matters of right and reason? All which (if time would permit, and it were worth the while) might by manifold instances be showed. I might add its multitude of silly ceremonies, grounded on no reasonable design, nor subser-

vient to any purpose of virtue. But what is said doth enough declare this religion to be of no divine extraction.

As for ancient Judaism; that it has no such revelation as that we require, and did in the former conclusion assert, (nor has any probability to expect an universal, complete, standing revelation,) on many scores may appear. It is from the tenor thereof evident that it was designed only for one small nation, possessing a very inconsiderable portion of the earth; purposely distinguished, and, as it were, concealed from the rest of mankind; and in effect so remaining for many ages (until the Roman conquests opened the world and discovered them) in a solitary obscurity; so that the most inquisitive surveyors of the earth, and searchers into the customs of people, (Herodotus, for instance, and others,) could not discern them, did take no notice of them; though for their peculiar manners otherwise most remarkable. 'He showed,' saith the psalmist, 'his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine,' saith God to the Jews, Levit. xx. 26. and, 'So shall we be separated,' saith Moses in his address to God, Exod. xxxiii. 'So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are on the face of the earth:' 'Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth:' and for this very purpose (of distinction and separation) many of their laws were appointed; 'I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people: ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean,' &c. We see the laws of that religion particularly directed to that people; 'Hear, O Israel,' being the usual compellation, set in the head of them: and, 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt,' is the introduction to the very decalogue itself: the encouragements also to, and discouragements from, obedience, do peculiarly appertain to them; a long and prosperous enjoyment of the land of Canaan, if they did obey; and dispossession or affliction therein, if they should pre-

same to disobey; 'You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye possess.' Such were the promises exciting to obedience; and the threatenings to disobedience suitable; as everywhere in their law and story is visible.

This revelation therefore cannot be deemed general, such as we argued in reason might be expected from him, who, as the psalmist sings, 'is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;' who 'hath made of one blood πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων, the whole nation of mankind,' as St. Paul in the Acts expresseth it; who, as St. Peter there implies, 'is no respecter of persons,' or of nations: 'who is the Maker and Saviour of all men,' and, as the wise man tells us, 'careth for all alike;' being desirous that 'all men should be saved, and come to the knowlege of the truth;' not willing 'that any should perish, but that all men should come to repentance;' who is not φιλεβραῖος only, or φιλέλλην, (a lover of Jews only, or Greeks,) but φιλάνθρωπος, a lover of men, and φιλόψυχος, a lover of souls; who, lastly, 'is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also:' as not our prophets and Apostles only tell us, but the reason of the thing, and the voice of nature doth declare.

And as this revelation was particular, so was it also partial; as God did not by it speak his mind to all, so neither did he in it speak out all his mind. Surveying this religion, may we not easily descry a great redundance in the circumstantial and exterior parts; a great defect in the substantials and inwards thereof? Ritual institutions innumerable we see, nicely described, and strongly pressed; moral precepts more sparingly delivered, not so clearly explained, nor so fully urged by rational inducements: observation of times and places; distinction of meats and habits; corporal cleansings and purgations; modalities of outward service in sacrifices and oblations, those δικαιώματα σαρκὸς, (Heb. ix. 9. 10.) justifications of the flesh, that could not perfect the observer's conscience, (or mind, or inward man;) touch not, taste not, handle not, most largely and with extreme punctuality, some of them under heavy penalties (excision and extermination) enjoined; while moral duties and

spiritual devotions (so exceedingly more agreeable to rational nature, and more pleasing to God) seem not so perfectly provided for. Many things are tacitly connived at, or plainly permitted to them, (as polygamy, divorce, some kind of revenge and uncharitableness,) which even natural reason dislikes or condemns: God's placability and aptness to forgive great sins, wilfully and presumptuously committed, (such as no man lives altogether free from,) not openly revealed, but rather the contrary expressed, ('Cursed is he that abides not in all things written in this law to do them:') which excludes all assurance, and discourages from hope of mercy; and consequently obstructs repentance and amendment of life. And where do we see any clear discovery concerning the immortality of the soul, or the future state, so material a point of religion, of so great moment to encourage virtue and piety? Even the Gentile theology seems more express in this point than the Jewish law; and the Pagan priests (by help of ancient tradition) seem to have reached farther than the Hebrew prophets: God indeed seems to have showed only his back parts to Moses; when he discovered no more of his nature and his pleasure to him: when he seems to delight in and lay so much stress on, those carnal and ceremonious performances. Neither do we herein charge God; for he did herein but what wisdom required: the laws and institutions of this religion were surely accommodated to the state and disposition and capacity of that people; people not very wise or considerate, grave or constant, meek or flexible; but a very stubborn, froward, humorous generation of men, as their own writings describe them; and therefore not capable of perfect instruction or rigorous precepts; like children, by reason of the grossness of their apprehension, and unruliness of passion, not *οἰκεῖοι ἀκρόαται*, (no proper auditors,) of a pure and accurate discipline; and as with such God in his wisdom and tender goodness seems to have dealt with them; dispensing with the infirmities of their age, and condescending to their mean capacities; feeding them with milk, and indulging them innocent trifles; and so tempering his ordinances given unto them, as might best serve partly to please and humor them, partly to curb and restrain them: whence St. Paul calls them 'poor and weak elements,' and

'elements of the word,' (such as vulgar and silly people were fit to learn,) adapted to the learning and practising of children; the law being a schoolmaster, to keep them in order, and prepare them for a higher instruction. Such variety of superficial formalities might well agree to childish fancies, and content slavish spirits; but to men improved in reason, who could relish spiritual entertainments, they must needs seem burdensome and tedious: wise men cannot be much affected with pomps and solemnities. In the practice of virtue and piety there are alluring sweetnesses and beauties, which it must needs displease him, that is sensible to them, to be avoked from, by an obligation to attend precisely to such an abundance of outward sapless observances; to be bound to chew such husks, neglecting so delicious a kernel, cannot but be irksome and grievous: they are therefore styled well in the New Testament an intolerable yoke and burden, (Acts xv. 10. 28.) and to be freed of them is a very valuable privilege, which Christ hath purchased for us, (Gal. v. 1.) It is true, by degrees God imparted farther manifestations of light even to that people, by the examples and instructions of holy men and prophets sent among them, in a manner and on occasions extraordinary: holy men by their practice showed that the rigor of the law might in some cases be relaxed and dispensed with; that a more spiritual service was acceptable to God; that he loved a purer devotion and a higher charity than the law required. And the prophets often declared that God did not so much delight in ceremonious observances, but chiefly did require hearty piety, perfect justice, and tender charity; accompanied with meekness and patience, temperance and sobriety. By them also God discovered more of his gracious disposition and merciful intentions; that he could pardon the greatest sins, and was reconcilable to the most heinous offenders, on sincere repentance and amendment of life. But these arbitrary and extraordinary dispensations of farther light and instruction to the Jews do confirm our purpose, showing that God did not primarily intend the Jewish law for a complete discovery of his mind; having reserved so much to be discovered in fit opportunity, argues that more still might be behind, as indeed we see that future life and immortality was not even by the prophets quite brought to light; that better

covenant, established on better promises, was not yet revealed.

Yea, this religion, as it was not universal and complete, so neither was it immutable and perpetual: itself tells us that God hereafter would raise another prophet, (for extraordinariness and eminency like to Moses,) which should have words by God put into his mouth, (new words, surely, new revelations from God,) whom they particularly should be obliged to hear and obey: that 'the days should come, when the Lord would make a new covenant with the house of Israel,' different from that which he made with their fathers after their delivery from Egypt; not to be written on stones, but impressed on men's hearts: concerning which we may say with the author to the Hebrews, 'If the first had been ἄμεμπτος, faultless and perfect, there would have no place been found for the second:' and, 'By speaking of a new one, he antiquated the old one.'

That another priesthood should infallibly be established, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek; (not to offer carnal sacrifices, but to impart spiritual benedictions.)

That time should be, when God would 'gather all nations and tongues; and they should come and see his glory;' and out of them God would take (that which the Mosaical constitution would not permit) of them for priests and for Levites.

That there should be a Zion, a mountain seated above all mountains, wherein God would place his perpetual residence, (his seat of worship and government,) to which all nations should flow, to learn God's will and walk in his ways. (Which could not be Jerusalem, which is long since desolated; and which, if standing, could be no convenient resort for all the world; it is another spiritual Zion, a mystical rock is surely prophesied of.)

That God will 'create a new heaven and a new earth;' (a wholly new world and state of things;) 'so that the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind.'

That God would pour his spirit of prophecy on all flesh, (though the prophetical spirit hath long deserted the Jewish nation;) that 'the earth shall be filled with the knowlege of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' (Jude-

ism cannot be this knowlege, which was never likely to fill the earth.) That 'from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same God's name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto his name, and a pure offering.' (In every place incense shall be offered unto God, not only at Jerusalem, to which the Jewish service was confined.) For that a time was determined to finish transgression, and make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and introduce everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy; and to anoint the most holy: that is, in fine, that God would send the Messias, to enlighten the world with a perfect instruction; revealing God's will, and declaring his mercy to mankind; to erect an universal spiritual kingdom over men's hearts, reducing them to the knowlege and obedience of God: these things (to which I might add divers more) sufficiently show that the Mosaical dispensation was but temporal and changeable; and that that was intended by God to be done, which the author of the Hebrews affirms done by Christ: an abrogation is made of the precedent command, for its weakness and unprofitableness, (its unprofitableness to the purposes of bringing men to such a spiritual sanctity which would please God;) which is another consideration, that shows the imperfection of the Jewish religion. If Judaism could not dispose men to any tolerable degree of piety and righteousness acceptable to God, (that which St. Paul so largely proves in the Epistle to the Romans,) if it also tenders no favor or pardon to those which had transgressed the Law and offended God, (which he also there and otherwhere shows,) it was necessary that either all men should lie under a desperate slavery to sin and guilt, or that God should discover another way of righteousness and mercy to be obtained.

That the Christian doctrine did proceed from God, is a principle on which our faith of all particular articles in our Creed doth rely; the truth and reasonableness of which I began to show, proceeding by some steps; whereof the first was, the probability that God should reveal such a doctrine for the benefit and direction of mankind; the second, that no other religion can pretend to such a revelation: these assertions do well prepare our way to a third, (which now we proceed to,) that I

might farther consider how unsuitable the Jewish religion was to the common nature and genius of mankind; and therefore unapt to prevail on men's minds: *Judæorum mos absurdus, sordidusque*, (the Jewish way of religion is uncouth and sordid,) was Tacitus's censure; but it agreed to the general conceit of men about it, at that time when it began to be commonly known and observed: and a religion so little plausible or probable, (so apt to be disliked and despised,) it is not likely that God would commend to the generality of mankind. But I will not farther insist on this argument; but proceed to assert,

3dly, That the Christian doctrine is in all respects such as might become God to be the author of; worthy his wisdom and goodness to reveal and impose on mankind. We cannot imagine a better, more clearly true, more full and exact; more satisfactory to our minds and to our wants: we have therein the nature and will of God plainly declared, so far as it is fit and useful for us to know them; together with our relations to him, and all the state of our own souls: an exact rule of life prescribed to us, with all fit helps and proper encouragements to the performance of our duty; the way of obtaining all the happiness we are capable of, and avoiding all misery, clearly set before us; all the darkness removed, the doubts resolved, the mistakes corrected, with which mankind, in those matters of highest concernment, hath been hitherto disturbed and distracted. It assigns, I say, a true and lively character of God; true, because worthy of him; agreeable to whatever reason dictates, and the works of nature show concerning him; ascribing all conceivable perfections to him in the highest degree, and asserting all his due rights and prerogatives; omniscient wisdom and almighty power; infinite benignity and beneficency toward his creatures; supreme majesty and authority over all; having made all things with especial regard to man; and upholding them with the same gracious respect; and governing them with a particular care and providence; searching all the thoughts, and ordering all the actions of men to a general (and ultimate) good end: this is the first excellency of our religion, which is great, both as to the object and influence thereof. The ignorance of God's nature, or misconceptions

about him, what mischief and what superstitions do they not produce in the worship of God! Christian religion represents him in his essence one, perfectly simple, spiritual, omnipresent, eternal, impassable, and immutable; self-sufficient and infinitely happy: in his interior disposition of will and in all his purposes absolutely free, pure, and holy; just, faithful, and constant: in all his dealings with rational creatures, as very careful and tender of their good; exceedingly gracious and merciful toward them; so in nowise fond or indulgent, but impartially just and severe against all iniquity, obstinately pursued and persisted in; most amiable in his goodness, most terrible in his justice, most glorious and venerable in all his proceedings: it represents him compassionate of our evils; placable for our offences; accessible, and inclinable to help us in our needs. Thus, but with advantage beyond what I can express, it describes God to us, mixing nothing unworthy or misbecoming him, (as other religions and doctrines may be observed to do;) adding nothing repugnant to what natural light discerns or approves, but showing something beside and beyond what it can discover; concerning his incomprehensible nature and manner of subsistence; his unsearchable counsels of wisdom; his admirable ways of providence; whereby he hath designed to commend his goodness and glorify his justice to us: which kind of truths, (exceeding the reach of human invention and capacity,) as it becomes God (so far transcending us in wisdom and knowlege) to reveal them, so they so wonderfully suiting to the perfections of God otherwise discernible by us, do argue the divinity of the doctrine that acquaints us with them. That God should send his Son out of his bosom, to partake our nature, and appear in our flesh; to manifest his will unto us; to set before us an exact pattern of holy life, (the most difficult parts especially thereof, humility and patience;) by his obedience and suffering to expiate our sin and reconcile God to mankind, is a mystery indeed and depth of goodness, which our reason cannot fathom, which we can better admire than understand: but neither can any reason contradict or disprove it: nothing can be incredible to us concerning that immense goodness, whose common care of us even in matters of ordinary providence is so wonderful and unaccountable, that

the consideration thereof made Job and the Psalmist thus exclaim; 'What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thy heart on him?' (Job. vii. 17.) 'Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowlege of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!' (Psal. cxliv. 3. viii. 4.)

2. This doctrine also informs us concerning ourselves, and the state of our souls; concerning the nobleness of our extraction and the dignity of our nature, derived from God and resembling him; how we fell from our original felicity, and lapsed into this wretched blindness, error, and disorder of soul, into this state of frailty, sorrow, and misery, by our distrust and disobedience to God; how being thus estranged from God, and exposed to his wrathful displeasure, we may recover again his love and favor, and may, by returning to God and complying with his will, be reinstated in a happy condition, more happy far than that from which we fell; that our souls are immortal, (a point which the wisest men have so much disputed about, and doubted of; and in the certain decision of which they would have been so much satisfied,) and what its state shall be after its separation from this body, suited to its demeanor and demerits in this life; what a judgment and trial all our actions (even our most secret thoughts and words) must undergo after this life: these so important truths, so useful for the satisfaction of our minds and the direction of our lives, so conducible to the clearing of our notions, even concerning nature and the course of things in this world, this doctrine plainly shows us: and is it not in that respect worthy to come from God, who alone could teach and satisfy us in these things?

3. As for that rule of life it prescribes us, nothing can be more exactly agreeable to our reason, more perfective of our nature, more conducible either to the public good, or to our private content. What can be more just and reasonable than all those duties of piety which it requires; than highest esteem and honor of him, which is most excellent; most hearty love and affection to him, who is in himself most good, toward us most beneficent; most awful fear of him, who is so powerful, so pure, so just and severe; gratitude to him, from whom we

have received our being, and all our good things; trust and hope in him, who can do what he will, and will do whatever he hath promised, and whatever in reason we can expect from his goodness; all obedience and observance of him, whose children and servants and subjects we are born? Can there be a greater privilege than liberty of access to him in our needs, who is alone able to supply them? Can we desire on easier terms to receive benefits, than by acknowleging our wants and asking for them? Is there a more equal or favorable kind of satisfaction for our offences, than confession and repenting of them? Is it not fit we should endeavor to promote his glory, who hath been so careful of ours? The practice of such a piety cannot but produce excellent fruits, a joyful peace of conscience, a comfortable hope, a freedom from all superstitious terrors and affrightments; and therefore is not our obligation to these duties most reasonable? And for our behavior toward each other, what better directions can we have, than those which our gospel affords us: that we cordially love one another, earnestly desire each other's good, pity all the evils of our brethren, be ready to afford them all the help and comfort we can, not limiting this our charity, but extending it to all, in imitation of God's boundless beneficence; that we should mutually bear infirmities, and pardon all injuries done us, not rendering evil for evil, but requiting evil with good; that we be just and honest in all our dealings, observant of all duties concerning our relations, diligent in our callings, peaceable and quiet in our stations, respective and obedient to our superiors, meek and gentle and courteous in our behavior toward all men, rooting out all malice, wrath, envy, strife, animosity, ill suspicion out of our hearts, forbearing to revile, slander, detract, or rashly to censure any man. Now what great benefits is it not evident that the practice of such duties would bring forth? What mischiefs would it prevent? How sociable, and pleasant, and secure a life should we lead therein? What innumerable griefs and troubles, fears and suspicions, discomposures and distractions of mind at home; what dangers, tumults, confusions, and tragedies abroad, would it remove? This part therefore of our rule plainly deserves the impression of divine authority on it. As for the precepts concerning the management of ourselves, our own souls and bodies; those which oblige us to

be humble and modest, calm and serene, contented and patient, pure and chaste, sober and temperate, banishing all haughty conceits and vain opinions concerning ourselves, regulating our passions and restraining our appetites, moderating ourselves in all corporeal enjoyments, possessing our vessels in sanctity and honor, abstaining from all unlawful and irregular pleasures, (base in kind or excessive in degree,) which may corrupt our minds, or impair our healths, or disturb our quiet: it prohibits us not the use of any creature, whence we may receive any profit or delight, but indulges us a prudent and sober enjoyment of them all, with sense of God's goodness and thankfulness, (1 Tim. iv. 4.) And who sees not what benefit and convenience doth accrue to us from obeying such commands? In few words; 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are decent, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue or any praise,' those things the Christian doctrine enjoins us to regard and practise. And what other religion, I pray, or what philosophy, hath so perfectly and clearly, with such consistence and with such confidence, taught us the like? If any have taught us some of them, (as it is no wonder if they should, since all of them are so plainly agreeable to good reason,) yet could none press them with such effectual inducements, nor enforce the practice of them on so true and necessary grounds. Some philosophies have highly commended virtue, and vehemently exhorted thereto; but the ends are mean which they aim at, the grounds very weak from which they argue: present satisfaction and tranquillity of mind, safety, quiet, convenience, and pleasure of this life; can they persuade men easily that these are sufficient inducements so carefully and painfully to follow virtue? Doth that thing deserve such mighty elogies, which hath no greater rewards or benefits than those attending it? No, surely. He that tells us by doing these things we shall imitate the highest goodness, we shall honor God and please him, we shall perform a duty of gratitude to our great Benefactor, we shall obtain the love and favor of God, we shall avoid his wrath and displeasure, we shall acquire not only comfort and peace of conscience here, but an everlasting crown of joy and bliss hereafter; he propoundeth ends infinitely more noble, he useth ar-

guments incomparably most efficacious and persuasive to the practice of virtue. No philosophy in any measure represents virtue so truly on all accounts estimable and eligible as this; none can discover the excellent fruits that grow on it.

4. Neither doth this religion only teach and persuade us to so excellent a way of life, but (what no other law or doctrine pretends to) it shows us the means, it affordeth us help and ability to practise it; (without which, such is the frailty of our nature, experience shows, that all instruction or exhortation whatever would signify little;) it is no dead letter, but hath a quickening spirit accompanying it; it sounds not only through the ear, but impresses itself on the heart: if our mind be doubtful or dark, it directs us to a sure oracle, where we may receive certain counsel and information: if our passions be turbulent, and our appetites outrageous; if temptation overbear us, it leadeth us thither, whence we may procure strength to resist and subdue them. This doctrine, lastly, fully satisfied us about that inquiry which hath so much perplexed all men, and with so much final irresolution hath exercised philosophers, wherein man's happiness consists, and what the means are to attain to it: that it doth not consist in any one of these transitory things, nor in a confluence of them all; but in the favor of God, and enjoyment of him, and in the blessings flowing thence; which happiness only by a sincere and constant obedience to God's commandments, a practice of that virtue and piety, (in most part before specified,) is obtainable. Such is the tenor of the Christian doctrine: these things it discovers and teaches, not with fine methods of artificial eloquence and subtilty, πειθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις, the persuasive words of human wisdom, but with a majestic simplicity, confidence and authority, with demonstration of Spirit and power; such as becomes the sovereign Lord to use, when he vouchsafes to declare his mind. I should have interposed this very material observation, that Christianity requires chiefly, and in a manner only, a rational and spiritual service, not clogged with multitude of external rites and observances; (those few it enjoins are plainly most reasonable, very decent and useful, fit to instruct us in and excite us to our duty;) which shows that this revelation is complete, suitable to the most adult age, the most ripe and im-

proved capacities of man. But I must leave this point: and, I think, thus much may suffice to show that a doctrine so beneficial and satisfactory to mankind, so exceedingly beautiful and amiable, so agreeable to reason, and yet so much surpassing it, may well be supposed to have proceeded from divine authority and revelation: *Non vox hominem sonat;* the true tone and air of it sounds above the voice of man; its looks so much resemble the divine wisdom and goodness, one cannot think it had any other parent.

To these abstracted considerations I add, (which is the last step of our discourse,)

Lastly, that *de facto*, in very deed, God hath asserted and attested to the Christian doctrine. God is himself invisible and indiscernible to our senses; neither could we endure the lustre and glory of his immediate presence: it must be therefore by works supernatural and extraordinary (such as no creature can effect or counterfeit) that he must (if ever assuredly) signify his mind and purpose to us: and of such there is no kind of attestation needful or (perhaps) possible, which God hath not afforded to this doctrine. He had by many several prophecies, in different times, long before presignified that he would make such a revelation to mankind, to be dispensed by a person extraordinarily qualified, and especially to be favored by himself, whom therefore the Jewish nation did with much desire expect; to which prophecy, as no other hath appeared that can pretend to agree, so this is very congruous. And this is one way most proper to God of attesting his mind; because it cannot be anywise counterfeited, it being only in God's power to foretel such future events. Another way is by express voices and apparitions from heaven; and by these God declared the same at several fit seasons: to St. John the Baptist (that most just and holy person, so taken and acknowleged by all, even by his enemies that murdered him) when Jesus was baptised; to St. Peter, and St. John, and St. James, three most credible witnesses, if any can be, concerning matter of fact; and again, before the multitude, a little before his death; to St. Paul, a person also in all respects credible, and in most remarkable circumstances: and such attestations as these it is not likely God would suffer to be given to falsehood or imposture: if any

creature should be so daring as to endeavor it, we cannot reasonably deem that God would permit his name and authority (in so direct a manner) to be abused.

3. But farther, to thwart the course of nature, and act against its established laws, can only belong to him who is Lord of nature, who made it, and upholds it, and governs it by a perpetual decree: and this, in favor and countenance to this doctrine, hath God performed, not once, but often, in many places, through a long course of time, in several ways, by many instruments, most openly and visibly. Numerous were such supernatural works performed by the principal author of this doctrine, our Lord himself; many of them so public and palpable, that they convinced many of the spectators; and them not only indifferent and ingenuous people, but those who were most unwilling to be convinced, and ashamed or afraid to acknowlege their conviction. 'Many,' saith St. John, 'believed on him, beholding the miracles that he did.' Nicodemus came secretly to him, and confessed thus; 'We know that thou hast come a teacher from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.' Again it is said; 'Many of the people believed in him, saying, When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?' Also of the rulers, 'many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' 'What shall we do?' saith the Chief Priests and Pharisees; 'for this man doth many wonders. If we thus let him alone, all men will believe on him.' St. Peter thus confidently appeals to the Jewish nation; 'Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved (or demonstrated) by, or from, God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves know.' So notorious were many of our Saviour's miracles, that his worst adversaries could not but acknowlege them: and of these the most signal, his resurrection, was such, that no evasion seems devisable to withstand either its truth as to the fact, or its force to confirm our purpose, (that God did attest to this doctrine;) by it indeed God did, as St. Paul speaks, πίστιν παρέχειν πᾶσι, yield an argument most persuasive to all, that what our Saviour taught (partica-

larly concerning the immortality of our souls, the resurrection of our bodies, and the judgment to come) is most certainly true. That our Saviour really died, all the world could testify, (no death was ever more solemn or remarkable;) that he rose again, was attested not by one or two, but by many persons, (those most familiarly acquainted with him,) who did not see him once, in passing, at a distance, but often, for a good time, (forty days together,) conversed with him, (above five hundred of such persons at once did see him, as St. Paul tells us;) so that they could not be deceived themselves therein, being αὐτόπται, and αὐτήκοοι τοῦ λόγου, perfectly informed concerning the matter as eyes and ears could make them: 'not having followed cunningly devised fables, did we acquaint you with the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ;' but being ἐπόπται τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος, having a full view of his majesty:' and, 'What we heard ourselves, what we did see with our eyes, what our hands did feel, of the Word of life:' such, as to their ability of testifying the truth, was these men's testimony: and concerning the fidelity and honesty of these witnesses, that they should not either in this case (or concerning other actions of Christ which they attested to) wilfully deceive others, there be presumptions as great as can be. They were men that preached all goodness and sincerity to others, and in other things irreprovably practised them: they could have no design imaginable on any profit, or honor, or advantage whatever to themselves; (they refused all; they willingly underwent all afflictions and disgraces for the sake of this very testimony; bearing the cross was the *officium* they pretended to undertake, and the *beneficium* too they did promise themselves to enjoy in this world.) Peace of conscience, and hope of future reward, was plainly all the support they had; neither of which they could have enjoyed or expected in the maintenance of a lie; persecution from men, and damnation from God, they must be sure of, if conscious of so villanous a design, to abuse the world with a tale; neither were they downright madmen or fools, (as they must have been, if they could have believed themselves, or thought to persuade others, such stories, had they been false;) their excellent writings show the contrary, and the prodigious efficacy their endeavors found: so unanimous a

consent, so clear a confidence, so firm resolution, so invincible constancy and patience, nothing but truth itself and a good conscience could inspire men with. It is possible, in matter of speculation and subtilty, men on weak grounds might be desperately pertinacious; but in matter of fact to be so, none in such circumstances and to such purposes could be so basely stupid; no such men surely. No matter of fact ever had, nor could have in any respect, a stronger attestation: to doubt or distrust it were to invalidate all proof by testimony; (on which yet all administration of justice, all commerce and transaction of human affairs, doth in a manner subsist and depend;) it were to embrace the vanity of the most impudently pertinacious sceptics: and admitting the truth of their testimony, (as if we be reasonable and ingenuous we must,) to believe that God should do such works, or should permit them to be done, (should lend his sovereign power and interpose an extraordinary hand,) for procuring credit to a falsehood; that he should so far contribute to men's delusion in matters of this nature, concerning his own honor and men's salvation, is a conceit as blasphemous and dishonorable to God, as derogatory to his attributes of wisdom, justice, and goodness, as can be. This kind of attestation did God yield, not only to the person of our Lord, but to his disciples and followers for a long time after, as by the same authentic testimonies doth appear; yea it continued for some ages, so long as any such extraordinary means were needful or convenient for conviction of the world; as by many express passages in Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Origen, Cyprian, and other ancient writers, might be showed. I shall only add one kind of divine confirmation more, which was that of an extraordinary providence attending this doctrine in the conveyance and propagation thereof; that by the ministry of a few mean, poor, unlearned, and simple men, without any outward circumstances commending them to men's regard; without any assistance of power, any subtilty of wit, any trains of policy, any eloquence of speech, any external advantage discernible; yea against all these, against the utmost endeavors of all the force in the world, all politic devices, all cruel persecutions; against all prejudices of education, public law, inveterate custom; against most subtle and eloquent adversaries, it should

in a short time so vastly prevail, so that within a while all the power, and wit, and eloquence of man did submit unto it and serve under it, is an argument that God did interpose his almighty hand: no less power could effect so unaccountable a charge: it seems no less a miracle in matters of this nature, (a moral or political miracle I may call it,) than to blow up a great oak with one's breath, or remove a mountain with a word speaking, would be a miracle in nature.

I might adjoin that this doctrine being so much directed against, so vigorously impugning, the domination and delusion of wicked spirits, (being so prejudicial and destructive to the interest of hell,) all the malice, wit, and power of the devil we may presume employed against it; and such potent combinations of mundane and infernal force to withstand, subdue, and overthrow, cannot justly or reasonably be ascribed to any other power than that of heaven. The proceeding also in so meek and quiet a way, without any tumult or terror, not rudely forcing men's outward compliance, but sweetly drawing their hearts into the love and approbation of this doctrine, so different from the course of human proceeding, so becoming the divine goodness, doth well consent and confer to the efficacy of this discourse. But I cannot insist longer on these things; yet think I may well on all these premises (though very slightly and cursorily handled) conclude that the Christian doctrine did proceed from God.

I shall briefly touch the last principle; that there be proper and sufficient means by which we may discern the genuine doctrines and dictates of Christianity. Indeed if there were not such, our discourse hitherto used would be all vain, having no certain scope or subject; to no purpose had God dispensed a revelation for the direction and benefit of mankind, if he had not withal provided means of apprehending it with a competent certainty, such at least as might suffice to engage men honest and moderately wise on the practice of all necessary duties prescribed; (for enough to satisfy cavilling spirits, that are possessed with prejudices, or proceed on design, or delight in doubt and dispute, whose business and interest (or humor) it may be to confound things, did not need, perhaps could not be provided: there have been men that have questioned what the

most evident reason, the most common sense and experience shows; and such sceptics, or such politics no means will serve to satisfy their minds, at least to stop their mouths, but) in reality there be several means, by God's wise providence afforded, whereby we may discern Christian truth, some more convenient and secure, all in their kind proper and good. For transmitting to posterity any particular doctrine, no man can doubt but the most sure way is its being commended to writing by the authors and inventors thereof, (those on whose authority it doth rely;) as if Pythagoras, or Socrates, or Zeno, their writings were extant, by them we should be best assured what their philosophers were: and no man will dispute whether that be genuine Peripateticism which is plainly read in the writings of Aristotle, the father of that sect; though even his unskilful expositors should mistake, or his prejudiced adversaries should pervert or calumniate his meaning. They that write are wont with most care and deliberation (and consequently with most perspicuity and exactness) to express their minds: and *litera scripta manet;* letters are subject to least variation: memories are frail, fancies are busy; but writings are easily preserved without considerable alteration. The next most sure way of conserving such doctrines, is the writings of the next disciples that immediately received them from the authors, or before they had passed through many hands, and commended them to writing: so what Socrates (for instance) did teach, the writings of Plato and Xenophon can with a very good degree of certainty acquaint us. The next is the writings of men (studious and learned in those matters) after larger distances of time; so as we may be informed concerning Stoicism by the writings of Cicero, of Epictetus, of Seneca: the which way is more imperfect, every writer being apt to misapprehend and misrepresent something; especially all affecting to do somewhat more than transcribe what they find in former authors, to comment and descant on, to adorn and set out, to confirm or confute the doctrine they relate, in order thereto representing it with advantage to their purpose. The last way is by continued tradition, by oral instruction, successively from time to time; which is of all ways most liable to defect and corruption: for the teacher may unaptly express his meaning, and the hearer may not

rightly understand him; the memory of both may in some material thing faulter. Men love to be curious in their speech, to vary in expression, to make explications, to draw consequences, to mix their own conceits and inventions, to show the acuteness of their wit and the fruitfulness of their fancy, to display all their faculties of ratiocination and eloquence: especially they are apt to accommodate doctrines to their own prejudices, inclinations, and designs; whence error and difference may insensibly creep through this conduit; and the farther such tradition departs from the original spring, the more subject it is to contract such alterations and impurities. Every doctrine thus propagated is like a stream; at the head it is small and narrow, clear and pure; proceeding on, it grows larger and fouler: so tradition swells, by taking in what oblique channels of private fancy and pragmatical invention discharge into it; and by receiving tincture from particular inclination or politic design, it grows muddy and feculent. We have all these ways afforded us; and for confirmation and distinction of our doctrine may use them all: in the principal doctrines (such as we mentioned) they all conspire; and therefore there can be no reason to doubt that they are pure and genuine: but in reason the best and surest means of knowing what our Saviour and his disciples taught, are the writings of his disciples, (persons, besides their advantage of immediately learning from our Saviour's mouth, extraordinarily assisted by God in their ministries and instructions,) of whose writings many have by God's good providence been preserved to our times, being such as no man hath reason to question that they came from them, (no more than concerning the most undoubted writings of any author;) wherein they aim at nothing else but to declare the doctrine of Christianity, and inculcate the practice thereof, in the most simple, plain, and familiar manner, plainly agreeing with each other in the main drift and design of their discourses; so that we may justly presume that all important doctrines of Christianity are in them fully delivered, and that whatever we find in them perspicuously expressed we are obliged to take for such. To the same purposes we may use the writings of the Christians of the first ages, who with care committed to writing what they had learned from the mouths of the Apostles or their

successors: for in so small distance of time it is not likely any considerable variation should intercur; neither would such men, living in times of persecution, and suffering for conscience sake, so free from all designs of avarice or ambition, be so ready to alter or adulterate the doctrine they received: and supposing the writings of the Apostles were wanting, even theirs would yield us a competent knowlege of the Christian doctrine: neither, were their monuments also lost, should we be quite destitute of means, from the lowest and latest, whether writings or traditions of Christianity, to discover its principal and fundamental doctrines: for discreetly paring off some excrescences, discernible enough to have proceeded from human invention, what sophistical curiosity hath introduced, (nice positions and questions about the right application of terms of art,) what politic design hath added, (wherein some sorts of men are, we may plainly see, privately concerned,) what plainly relishes of those ages wherein ignorance and superstitious dotage did so generally prevail, what is inconsistent with the most generally acknowleged principles of our religion; refining, I say, with some serious consideration, the pure ore from such dross, we may not difficultly perceive, even by the use of the most inferior means allowed us, what the true principles of Christianity are. But since God hath vouchsafed us so various helps, we may in their due order, according to our capacity, apply them all; comparing present traditions with ancient writings, and confirming what we learn from these by the supreme and unquestionable authority of holy Scripture. But this argument the time will not permit me to prosecute distinctly, and as it deserves. These digressionary discourses (which yet I thought pertinent to the design of our business, declaring and confirming the grounds of our faith) being thus passed over, I shall hereafter closely pursue the explication of the Creed; in the mean while craving pardon from your patience, &c.

I believe in God the Father.

THE appellation of God not improperly taken, (as when it is attributed to creatures, on some resemblance in nature or office they bear to the supreme God,) but relating to him who

only truly and properly is styled God, is sometimes put absolutely, sometimes hath a relative apposition going along with it. Being absolutely (or singly) put, it sometimes refers, by way of eminency, particularly to the first Person in the glorious Trinity; as when Christ is called 'the Son of God;' and the Holy Ghost, 'the Spirit of God;' and when God is put in distinction from the other Persons: (when, for instance, it is said, 'That they may know thee the only true God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ:' 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:' 'The Word was with God:' 'To serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven:' and in that form of blessing; 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.' But commonly it is to be understood for God essentially considered, (according to that divine essence common to the three Persons;) to whom in that respect all the divine attributes agree, and from whom all divine operations (absolute and *ad extra*) do jointly proceed. And to this sense or notion we have hitherto supposed that the name of God might here be applied: for that there is one God, having such essential attributes, is the first principle and foundation of all religion; which we must therefore suppose, if not directly expressed, yet at least sufficiently implied in the Creed. And supposing the word in part doth imply this sense, the attribute or title of Father doth, in many respects, truly and properly belong to God. Being a father denotes causality, sustenance, beneficence, governance; especially when these operations are attended with particular care and affection; in all which respects (severally considered, or jointly) God may fitly be styled Father: Father of all things being: Father of all intellectual beings especially: the Father particularly of all men; and, among men, chiefly of good men. He is the Father of all beings, as the maker and efficient cause of them. So is he called in that famous sentence of Plato's Timæus; Τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ δὲ τοῦ παντὸς εὑρεῖν τε ἔργον, καὶ εὑρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν: That Maker and Father of this universe it is hard to find out; and, having found him, it is impossible to express him unto all men: and Πατέρα πάντων, St. Paul calls him, 'the Father of all things,' (taking πάντων in

the largest sense.) 'To us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things.' Neither only as author, but as he by whose care and providence all things subsist, and are contained in order; 'He commanded, and they were created: he hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree, which shall not pass:' 'On whom the eyes of all wait; and he giveth them their meat in due season,' as the Psalmist sings: and in this respect we often find, even in heathen poets, the title *Pater* (Father) absolutely put to denote God, as the author and disposer of all things.

——Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit— Virg. Georg. i.

Jam satis terris nivis atque diræ
Grandinis misit Pater—— Hor.

And *Pater omnipotens* is the periphrasis by which the wisest of poets doth frequently use to design the supreme God. But more especially God is called the Father of intellectual beings; the Father of spirits: particularly the angels are (by excellency) called the sons of God: (Job i. 6.) 'There was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them:' (Job xxxviii. 7.) 'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy:' where, for the sons of God, the Seventy have ἄγγελοί μου; (though perhaps all God's creatures may there be understood, as it were rejoicing and exulting in their being newly conferred on them by God.) And of these beings God more especially is Father, not only for that he did produce them, and upholds them, as all other things, in being, but because they nearer resemble him in their nature; because he hath a more dear affection unto, a more particular care over them, and because he governs them in a more excellent kind, (by obligations of reason, ingenuity, and justice,) they also being capable to render offices of piety, obedience, and gratitude to him again. [And thus even the Pagan theologers did conceive God in especial manner the Father of the gods; (intending such gods as were not of men's making, creatures consecrated by the flattery or fondness of men; but of a higher rank, answering to our angels, which they conceived, as to

approach in excellency of nature, so to attend on God, partaking of his glory and happiness;) hence *Divûm Pater* is a common title of God among them: and we have in Plato's Timæus an oration, which he feigns God made to them at the creation, beginning thus; Θεοὶ θεῶν, Ὧν ἐγὼ Δημιουργὸς, Πατήρ· 'O ye principal gods, of whom I am the Maker and Father:' concerning which kind of God's children he pretends to deduce all he can speak from ancient and original tradition.] But (to come nearer to our particular relation) God is also in especial manner the Father of mankind,

Gentis humanæ Pater atque Custos,

as Horace calls him: Adam was the son of God; and so, at least, we are God's offspring; 'his hands made and fashioned us, and his mouth breathed into us the spirit of life:' 'he formed our spirit within us:' we were made after his image, and naturally resemble him: he hath assigned us the principal and most honorable station in this his family of visible creatures; he hath showed an especial tenderness toward us in providing for us all manner of sustenance and accommodation; in educating us with wholesome advices and precepts; in bearing with exceeding patience our infirmities and offences; in inflicting moderate chastisements, to reduce us to duty and amendment: all his carriage toward mankind argues a paternal regard and affection thereto.

Farther; in a peculiar notion God is the Father of good men: such relation being built on higher grounds and considerations: the seeds of virtue are by his grace sown in their hearts: that emendation and perfection of nature is effected by him. They resemble him in disposition of mind, in purpose, in action; which are more perfect and noble resemblances than those of nature; (being holy as he is holy; beneficent and merciful as he is: these qualities, our Saviour tells us, do render, or at least declare him our Father; do constitute men, or argue them to be, the sons of God: 'Love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you—that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven:' 'Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing thence; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the sons of the

Most High.') To such God bears a paternal affection and compassion; 'Like as a father pitieth his children; so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' He deals with them as with his children, in all respects; he instructs and guides them; he cherishes and comforts them; he maintains and protects them; he gently reproves and corrects them; 'Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.' [*Patrium habet Deus adversus bonos viros animum, et illos fortiter amat: inter bonos viros ac Deum amicitia est, conciliante virtute: amicitiam dico? imo etiam necessitudo et similitudo: quoniam quidem bonus ipse tempore tantum a Deo differt, discipulus ejus, æmulatorque et vera progenies; quem pater ille magnificus, virtutum non lenis exactor, sicut severi patres, durius educat:* God, saith a Pagan philosopher, hath a fatherly mind toward good men, and mightily loves them: between them and God there is a friendship, virtue conciliating it: a friendship, say I? yea, a kindred and resemblance: for that a good man differs only from God in time, (and degree,) being his disciple and imitator, and his true offspring; whom that magnificent Father, no softly exacter of virtue, as severe fathers do, brings up hardly.] And we may observe that God, in his proceedings with men, (such as he designs to contain them by within their duty, and lead them to happiness,) delights to represent and commend himself under this obliging and endearing relation: he did so toward the Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 6. 18. 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father that bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.' So God expostulates with that people. And thus David in their behalf addresses himself to God: 'Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever:' 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty,' &c. and, 'I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn: Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?' So God argues with them. But in the Christian dispensation God more signally represents himself in this quality: he treats us not so much as a Lord and Master, with imperious awfulness; but as a friend and a father,

with gracious condescension and allurement of kindness; 'I call you not servants; you are my friends, if you do what I command you:' so that (it is St. Paul's collection from a precedent discourse) 'thou art not still a servant, but a son.' Our Saviour, saith the author to the Hebrews, was not ashamed to call them (his disciples and followers) 'brethren.' 'Go,' saith our Saviour, 'to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and my God, and your God.' Accordingly all the performances of God toward us, and in our behalf, are of such a nature, and are set out by such terms, which ground and import this revelation.

1. That renovation of our nature, and qualifying our souls, as the gospel requires, is called regeneration, a new creation, a new birth, the begetting a new man within us. We are αὐτὸν ποίημα, (his work or production,) being 'created in Christ Jesus to good works.' 'Ye have been taught, to put on the new man, that is created according to God' (according to God's image) 'in righteousness and true holiness:' 'If a man be not born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God:' 'Whoever is begot of God, doth not do sin.'

2. The reception of a believer into the privileges and advantages of Christianity is termed υἱοθεσία, the making of him a son; adopting him into God's family; conferring on him the title and the quality of God's child; the internal disposition of spirit, and the liberty of access to God suitable to this relation: 'Whosoever,' saith St. John, 'did receive him, he gave to them authority to become the sons of God;' (he invested them in that dignity;) 'even to them who believed in his name:' 'Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus;' (that is, by embracing Christianity:) and, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God:' 'Ye have not received the spirit of servitude again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, O Father:' (by which, in our prayers, with humble affection, according to our Saviour's instruction, we say, 'Our Father.')

3. That resurrection after death to a better state of life, entering into glory and happiness and immortality, is worthily styled παλιγγενεσία, a being generated or born again:

whereby they receive from God another more excellent life and state of being, more like and conformable to God: 'They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead—are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection.' 'We know that if (or when) he shall appear, we shall be like him.' As we have borne 'the image of the earthly (man), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' We shall be metamorphosed (or transfigured) into the same image; shall be made partakers of the divine nature. That state of bliss is therefore styled a portion, or inheritance, allotted to sons; and consequent on that relation, 'If sons,' saith St. Paul, 'then heirs; heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ; receiving the reward and promise of an eternal inheritance:' and saith St. Peter, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.' I might add, that Christian men become the sons of God by our Saviour's intervention; by his assumption of our nature, and our conformity to his image, as St. Paul speaks, whereby he becomes 'the firstborn among many brethren:' Rom. viii. 29. 'God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, that we might receive the privilege of being made sons:' Gal. iv. 4. 5. In this respect our Saviour is πρωτότοκος ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, 'the first-born among many brethren.' Rom. viii. 29. On so many several scores is God our Father; as we are his creatures, (being made, preserved, and maintained by him;) as we are intellectual creatures, (placed in degree and quality of nature so near him;) as we by virtue and goodness anywise resemble him; as we are Christians, (adopted into his family, renewed by his grace, and destinated to a participation of his glory.)

Now the consideration and belief of these grounds, (each one and all of them together,) on which this relation of God to us is founded, hath manifold good uses, is apt to inform us of, to enforce on us many necessary duties, resulting from it. It teaches us what reverence and honor and observance is due to him; (not from gratitude only, and ingenuity, but in justice:)

'If I be a Father, where is my honor?' saith God, in Malachi. If we be bound to love and respect those, who, under God, have been instrumental in producing and maintaining us, how much more to him, who principally hath bestowed our being, and all the supports, comforts, and conveniences thereof on us? from whose free bounty we derive not only the benefits of this transitory life, but the privileges of the future, incomparably better, eternal state. If we neglect our duty, may not God justly expostulate with us, as with those children of his, Deut. xxxii. 6. 18. 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is he not thy Father that bought thee?' (ὃς ἐκτήσατο σε, who procured and acquired thee to himself;) 'hath he not made thee, and established thee?'

It will induce us to humility; if we are God's sons, have received our being, all our powers and abilities, all our goods and riches from his disposal, what reason have we to ascribe any thing to ourselves; to be raised in conceit, ambitious of praise or reputation, on the score of any such things? 'Who made thee to differ? for what hast thou that thou didst not receive? and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received?' It shows us that we are, as Plato often speaks, Θεοῦ κτήματα, God's possessions, God's riches they are called, Psal. civ. 24. If he made us, whatever we are, (according to all accounts and capacities; whether men by his common providence, or good men by his especial grace,) he hath the best right and title possible unto us; he may justly make such use of us, as he thinks good: we may well be obliged to 'glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's.' We have reason also hence to be content with whatsoever condition God disposeth us unto, or imposeth on us; he doth therein justly; and, if we complain, may we not be answered, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?' Is it not lawful? yea, is it not probable that God will order things for the best, for the good of his children? Will he willingly hurt them? Can he design their mischief? 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee.' Sooner may the most tender parents become unnaturally regardless, malicious, and cruel towards

their children, than God neglect the good of his offspring. We have reason therefore to be satisfied with all that befalls us; to be patient in the sorest afflictions; esteeming them to come from a paternal hand, inflicted with great affection and compassion, designed and tending to our good; 'Thou shalt consider in thy heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, the Lord thy God chasteneth thee,' saith God to the Israelites. 'We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' What sweeter comfort can there be, than to know that the most distasteful and cross accidents befalling us do conduce to our profit, shall prove most beneficial to us? This consideration also serves to cherish our faith, and raise our hope, and quicken our devotion. Whom shall we confide in, if not in our father? From whom can we expect good, if not from him, who hath given us already so much, even all we have? If we in our need, with due reverence and submission, request help from him, can such a father refuse us? No. 'What man is there of us, that if his son ask him bread, will give him a stone? or if he ask fish, will give him a serpent? If we then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?'

This consideration also may beget in us a due valuation of ourselves; and thereby raise us from base and unworthy practices; excite and encourage us to worthy designs and attempts: even natural light dictates to us the use of this consideration, and heathen philosophers much apply it; "If any one," saith Epictetus,* "could duly be affected with this opinion, that we are all originally descended from God, and that God is the Father both of men and gods, he would not, I suppose, conceive any thing ignoble or mean concerning himself: if Cæsar should adopt thee, none could endure thy superciliousness: and if thou knowest that thou art God's son, will it not elevate thee?" So

* Dissert. i. 3.

the philosopher. Shall we that are so nobly born, of so illustrious an extraction, so far debase ourselves as to regard and pursue trivial, abject, dishonorable things? shall we not be ashamed of such a contemptible degeneracy? shall we not be afraid, for such unworthiness to be degraded, rejected, and disinherited by our holy Father? who can nowise brook that such blots and dishonors should stick to his lineage, that such disorders and misbehavior should be committed in his family, that we should so deform his image impressed on us: 'Every branch that beareth not good fruit, he loppeth it from his stock, and casteth it away,' as our Saviour tells us. It is proper for children to resemble their father, in their countenance, in their temper, in their doings, 'If ye were Abraham's children' (so our Saviour argues) 'ye would do the works of Abraham:' and, 'Ye are of your father the devil, because ye perform the lusts of your father;' (because ye resemble him in his murderous and treacherous disposition.) So if we pretend to be the children of God, we must, according to St. Paul's exhortation, imitate him as dear children: we must be holy, and pure, just, beneficent, merciful, perfect as he is; otherwise we fall from this high dignity, we forfeit this excellent privilege of being thus related to God; we become aliens, and exiles, and enemies, instead of sons and friends, unto him.

Considering also this relation will prompt us how we should be affected, and how behave ourselves towards all God's creatures: if God be the Father of all things, they are in some sort all our brethren: shall we then abuse, trample on, or tyrannise over any of them? will God permit it, doth it become us to do so? If we be all branches sprouting from one root, streams issuing from one common source of divine beneficence, members of one family, we are obliged to universal goodwill and charity; to be kind and compassionate; to be helpful and beneficial, so far as our capacity reacheth; to endeavor, as we may, to preserve the order, and promote the welfare of the world, and all things in it. Especially toward those beings who, according to a more proper and excellent sense, are intitled the sons of this our common Father; toward beings intellectual, we hence learn our respective duties of love and respect toward those elder brethren of ours, the angels, (the blessed and

holy ones, I mean, such as have not degenerated from their nature, and apostatised from their duty toward God ;) of charity and goodwill to each other; which if we do not maintain, let us consider we are undutiful and unkind to God first, and then to ourselves; both his relations and our own we hate and harm, his children and our brethren, by hating or harming any man whatever, especially any good man, any Christian brother, who by so many other more especial bands is straitly tied unto us, on so many better grounds doth stand related both to God and us.

But let thus much suffice for this attribute or title of God, understood in this manner, as applicable to God essentially considered; which notion we see how true and useful it is. But that God is also here (and that according to the principal intention of the words) to be understood so as by way of eminency to signify the first Person in the blessed Trinity, and that the title or apposition Father doth respect especially him, who, according to a more proper and excellent manner, is the Son of God, our Lord Christ Jesus, may on divers accounts appear. 1. Because it follows, 'and in Jesus Christ his Son:' God is to be taken in that notion according to which Christ is his Son: the Father preceding relates to the Son following. 2. Because this Creed appears (according to our former discourses) enlarged on the foundation of the first most simple confessions, used in baptism, and those derived from the form prescribed by our Saviour, of 'baptising in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:' wherefore the Father here is to be interpreted according to that form. 3. The ancient Christians (from whom we received the words, and may best understand the sense) did thus generally take and expound them. Now that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the universal tenor of the gospel speaketh, and it is the chief doctrine thereof: this God from heaven by a vocal attestation declared, ('This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;') our Saviour professed; the Apostles preached; the miracles (performed by our Saviour) were intended to confirm. In this God manifested his transcendent love and mercy and goodness to mankind, that 'he gave his only-begotten Son, that no believer in him should perish, but have everlasting life;' 'that he did

not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all:' his own Son, ἴδιος υἱὸς, his peculiar Son, in a more proper and peculiar manner so: his μονογενὴς, only-begotten Son, (in a respect, according to which no other can pretend to that relation:) his ἀγαπητὸς, his darling, (whom he loves with a superlative dearness.) So that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that it is a fundamental point of our religion and belief, and that it is mainly designed here, doth sufficiently appear. Now the grounds of this paternity are several: his temporal generation by the Spirit and power of God; 'The Holy Ghost shall come on thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God;' 'When the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman.' His restoral from death to life: 'We preach the promise made to your fathers, that God hath fulfilled it to us their children, raising up Jesus; according also to what is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:' whence he is called πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, 'the first-born from the dead.' His designation of him to sovereign power and authority; 'Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel,' was Nathanael's confession, 'whom God appointed (or made) heir of all; putting all things under his feet.' 'Father,' our Saviour prays, 'glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power over all flesh:' 'All power is given me in heaven and on earth.' But the most eminent ground of this paternity (and most proper to this place) is that eternal generation whereby God the Father did in the beginning, before all time imaginable or possible, (in a manner unconceivable and ineffable,) communicate his own divine essence to God the Son: his essence, not specifically the same, (such as men impart, when they beget a son in their own likeness,) but the same individually; begetting him perfectly like himself, without any so much as accidental dissimilitude or disparity; (by an unconceivable irradiation of his glory, and impression of his substance, as the author to the Hebrews speaks.)

Which doctrine, (though full of deep mystery, and transcending the capacity of our understanding to comprehend,) as we are obliged, because it hath been God's good pleasure to

reveal it unto us, with a firm faith and humble adoration to embrace, so it is of great consequence and (even practical) use; serving to illustrate the wonderful grace of God in the dispensation evangelical, and thereby to beget suitable gratitude in us; encouragement and enforcement to our duty, strong faith and hope in God; as also to direct and order our devotion toward him.

But these considerations (with the farther probation of this great truth against some who have dared to oppose it) I shall refer to that article, in which we most expressly confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and consequently that God is his Father. And therefore proceed to the next word,

Almighty.

Though all the divine perfections (being intrinsical unto, and identified with, the divine nature or essence) do really and equally belong to each Person of the blessed Trinity, yet are eminently in some respect attributed to the Father, as the first Person in order of nature, the original fountain and root of the Deity: likewise although all divine operations *ad extra* (as proceeding from the same divine will and power) do proceed from all the three Persons, conspiring in them, yet are some, κατ' οἰκονομίαν, (by way of mysterious dispensation,) appropriated to one, some to another: as creation and dilection to the Father; reconciliation and redemption to the Son; illumination and sanctification to the Holy Ghost. Omnipotency therefore is here ascribed to God the Father not exclusively, but eminently, (for the Son and the Holy Ghost by participation of the divine nature from the Father are also omnipotent.) And God the Father is called 'the Maker of heaven and earth;' although by the Son (or Eternal Word) also 'all things were made, and without him was made nothing that was made:' and 'all things were created by him, both things in heaven, and things in earth, and things on earth; both things visible, and things invisible:' and the Spirit of God is said to have 'garnished the heavens,' (Job xxvi. 13.) and, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the spirit of his mouth,' Psal. xxxiii. 6. This I premise, to prevent

mistake, in supposing the glorious perfections, of works attributed to 'God the Father,' to be ascribed to him in distinction, and excluding the other Persons. Now to the attributes themselves.

Almighty.] The title or epithet παντοκράτωρ (which we render Almighty, or Omnipotent, there being no other word more properly and fully to express it) is often (in a manner peculiar and characteristical) ascribed to God in the Scripture; but in the New Testament from imitation (as it seems) or translation of the Greek in the Old, where it answers to two famous and usual names of God, Sabaoth and Shaddai, (especially to the former, for the latter is only so rendered in some places of the book of Job;) the name Sabaoth, I say; (for that it is so, we have expressly affirmed in several places; 'Their Redeemer is strong; Jehovah Sabaoth is his name,' Jer. l. 34. (so also Isa. xlviii. 2.) and Amos iv. 13. 'He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought—Jehovah Elohei Sabaoth is his name:' from whence some critics deduce Ζεὺς Σαββάσιος, mentioned in some heathen writers.*) Now the name Sabaoth doth seem to import God's universal dominion over the world: for all things of the world, as being ranged in a goodly order (like an army marching in array, or marshalled to battle) are called armies: thus the heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them, (καὶ πᾶς κόσμος αὐτῶν, saith the Greek: and all the world, or the furniture of them:) 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them:' 'Bless the Lord all ye his hosts;' (that is, all creatures:) 'Lift up your eyes on high,' saith the prophet Isaiah, 'and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth:'† where God is represented bringing forth, and ordering his creatures, as a general summons together to a rendezvous, and musters, and embattles his host. Hence, I say, this title of God (παντοκράτωρ) seems derived; (which in the Revelation of St. John is most frequently attributed to him; 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, ὁ παν-

* Aristoph. et Cicero. † Compare Ps. cxlvii. 4.

τοκράτωρ, who was, and is, and art to be,' is that heavenly hymn there resounded to God.) But not dealing so strictly, but taking the word παντοκράτωρ in its common latitude, for ὁ πάντων κρατῶν, (or ὁ πάντων κράτος ἔχων,) it may import either right and authority over all, (*omnipotestas*;) or power and ability to do all things, (*omnipotentia*;) or actual exercise of such authority and power, in ruling and disposing all things, (*omnipotentatus*;) also the possession or holding all things, (*omnitenentia*;) and the preservation or upholding all things, (*omnicontinentia*;) for κρατεῖν hath in propriety and ordinary use all these significations; and according to them all God is truly παντοκράτωρ. He hath, first, a just right and authority over all things; he is naturally the sovereign Lord and King of the world; 'The Lord of lords, and King of kings:' the spring and original of all right and authority. Whatever imaginable reason or ground there is of authority, it doth in respect of all things agree to God. Aristotle in his Politics discourseth thus:* Government doth aim at and tend to the mutual benefit of the governor and governed; that therefore which is most able and best disposed to provide for and procure the common benefit in natural reason and justice deserves to be, and is fitly the governor; whence the soul hath a right to govern the body, and men naturally do rule over beasts; and were there any such men as did so eminently exceed others in wisdom and goodness, to them, according to natural congruity, the government of others should appertain. If then such excellency of nature be a foundation of authority, God, who in wisdom and goodness doth incomparably exceed all things, hath a right to govern all: he is only wise, (and thence able,) only good, (and thence willing to manage all for the general welfare and benefit of the world.) If eminency of power do qualify for dominion, (as surely it doth, for what cannot be withstood, must in reason be submitted unto; it is vain to question that authority which by force altogether irresistible can maintain itself,) God hath the only right; nothing in the world being able to dispute his title; 'For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?

* Pol. i. 1. 3. 4.

O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee?' All things are weak and feeble in comparison; are in his hand; lie under his feet; are wholly at his discretion and disposal; 'The Lord is the true God,' saith the Prophet, 'and the everlasting king; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.' 'How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee:' 'He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves.' If to have made all things and to preserve them, do create a right of governing, (as it must needs: for what can we challenge justly a dominion over, if not over our own works; over that which we feed and nourish continually; over that which depends altogether on us, and which subsists but at our pleasure?) then well may the elders acknowlege, 'Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive the glory and the honor and the power;' (that is, the royal majesty and dominion over the world:) 'for thou hast made all things, and for thy will they are and were made.' Well might every creature that is in the heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and those things which are in the sea, and all things in them, cry out; 'To him that sitteth on the throne (and to the Lamb) be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion for ever and ever:' and Nehemiah; 'Thou, even thou, art the Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein, the sea, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee:' and king Hezekiah; 'O Lord of hosts—thou art the God, thou alone of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.'

Thus is God παντοκράτωρ, the rightful sovereign (on all accounts) of all things; *Divúmque hominumque æterna potestas*, (as the wise heathen poet could acknowlege and call him:) he is also so in regard of his infinite power, (omnipotent:) natural light affords us pregnant arguments and experiments of the greatness of his power, demonstrated in the constitution and conservation of the world; (disposing so stupendously vast, so innumerably various creatures into so comely and stable a posture: by them his eternal power and divinity are discerned, as St. Paul tells

us:) he that could effect so much, his power must needs be greater than we can imagine or comprehend: but holy Scripture declares more fully and clearly the extent of his power; that it reaches unto the utmost possibility of things; that whatever is not repugnant to his nature, (to his essential perfections, his wisdom, and goodness,) doth not misbecome him to do, or to the nature of things to be done, (that doth not imply a contradiction, and thereby is impossible, and no object of any power,) he can easily achieve: there is nothing so difficult, but he can perform it; nothing so strong or stubborn, but he can subdue it; 'Is any thing too hard for the Lord?' saith God to Abraham, when Sarah doubted or admired concerning God's promise, that she in so extreme an age should become fruitful. 'Behold,' (saith the Prophet Jeremiah in his prayer to God,) 'thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and thy stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:' Οὐκ ἀδυνατήσει παρὰ Θεῷ πᾶν ῥῆμα· Nothing (that can be said, or conceived, or done) shall be impossible to God, (if he pleases to undertake it,) said the angel to the Blessed Virgin, when he delivered so strange a message to her, concerning an event so wonderful and supernatural. That a rich man should be induced to part with all, and submit to God's will, our Saviour affirmed exceedingly difficult, ('harder than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle:') but to satisfy his disciples' scruple thence arising, he subjoins; 'With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.' 'In thine hand,' saith Jehoshapat, 'there is power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee.' 'He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' Nebuchadnezzar (having felt an experiment of his power, and being returned to a right understanding) did so confess; 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?' he is El Shaddai, the God all-sufficient; able to do whatever he pleases. He made the world at first with a word; ('By the word of the Lord were the heavens made,' saith the psalmist; 'and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth:—let the earth fear the Lord:—for he spake, and it was done;

he commanded, and it stood fast;') and by a word he doth preserve it, ('upholding all things,' saith the Apostle, 'by the word of his power,' or by his mighty word;) and by a word he can destroy all things; yea more easily, in a manner by his silence; by withdrawing that salutary breath, which cherisheth all things; ('Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou withholdest thy breath, they die, and return to their dust:') for even in this respect is God all-powerful, for that all power is derived from and depends on him: he not only can do all things, but nothing can be done without him; 'Without me you can do nothing,' is true not only in spiritual matters, but in all others: He gives, as St. Paul preached at Athens, life, (or being with all vital faculties,) and breath, (all natural powers,) and all things unto all: 'In him (or rather, by him) we live, and move, and have our being;' whatever we have, or can do, proceeds from him: thus is God Almighty. He is also so, by reason that he doth actually exercise all dominion, and exerts his power, according to his pleasure; he hath not only a just title to govern all things, and ability to sway, but he uses them; 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all:' 'The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens:' 'Who is like unto the Lord our God, who humbleth himself, to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!' It is indeed a great condescension in God, that he will vouchsafe the government of things, so much inferior to him; yet for the general good he doth it; 'Thine,' saith David, 'is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all: both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all: in thine hand is power and might,' &c. He is indeed the only governor, absolutely and directly so, (μόνος δυνάστης, the only Potentate;) all authority and power are imparted by him, are subordinate to him; by his disposal and direction all potentates receive them; and in his behalf, by virtue of his commission and command, as his delegates and officers, they administer any dominion or power: it was Nebuchadnezzar's doom to be driven from men until he did know this truth, (so necessary for all princes to know and consider,) 'that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whom-

soever he will:' 'His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.' 'Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another:' 'There is no power but from God;' 'the powers that are, are appointed by God:' 'The judgment is God's,' (said Moses in his charge,) exercised in his behalf, and according to his appointment. Thus is God παντοκράτωρ; the only direct sovereign commander; the author and fountain of all authority, 'the Lord of lords, and King of kings.' He also is παντοκράτωρ, as the true proprietary and just possessor of all things; (*Omnitenens;*) 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth,' saith Melchizedek: 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein: for he hath founded it on the seas, and established it on the floods:' 'Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is,' saith Moses: and the psalmist again; 'The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof;' (that is, all which the world contains, which it is replenished with:) 'The sea is his, and (that is, *for*) he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.' Thou hast founded them: all things are God's goods and possessions, (for that he hath made, and by creation purchased them to himself; so we see the psalmist argues,) and so the disposal of them do belong unto him; he may and doth apply them to what use he pleaseth. He is also *Omnitenens*, (it is St. Austin's word,) as containing all things in his hand, encircling and comprehending them, as it were, in his arms; 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit?' saith the Psalmist, 'or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.'

'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?'

'Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my hand hath spanned the heavens.'

He, lastly, is παντοκράτωρ, in regard that he sustains and preserves all things; Οὐκοῦν, saith Gregory Nyssen, ὅταν τῆς παντοκράτωρ φωνῆς ἀκούομεν τοῦτο νοοῦμεν τὸ πάντα τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῷ εἶναι συνέχειν: When we hear the word Almighty, we understand that God doth contain all things in being. 'Thou, even thou,' say the Levites in Nehemiah, 'art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.' In all these respects is God truly Almighty.

The belief and consideration of which truths are of great importance and use to us: if God be the sovereign Lord of all things, (which is the chief sense of this article,) and we consequently his subjects and vassals; then is all awful reverence, worship, and obedience, due from us to him: we are in justice bound humbly to adore his majesty, and readily to perform his commands, and patiently to submit to his will. We must not think to guide our actions according to our own will or fancy, as if we had no Lord over us; but conform them we must to the decrees and determinations of our most good and wise Governor. It is our duty to do thus, and we have reason to do it willingly and cheerfully; for it is also our happiness to be under so just and gracious a government: it is no cruel tyrant, un unjust usurper, but a most gracious and equal King, whom we are in subjection to; of whom it is said truly, 'Justice and judgment are the establishment of his throne; mercy and truth go before his face;' whom we are exceedingly obliged to thank that he will vouchsafe to undertake the tuition and oversight of us: so that in this consideration the psalmist might well excite the world to joy and jubilation; 'O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph: for the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.' All the world hath reason, not only to be content and acquiesce, but to rejoice and triumph in being subject to such a Governor, so able, so willing to maintain good order, peace, and equity therein.

Also, if God be omnipotent, able to do all things, and of irresistible power, then have we all reason, 1. To hope in his providence, and rely on his promises. For that he is able to supply us with all we need, and perform whatever he hath

promised. It was Abraham's virtue, (so acceptable to God, and so richly rewarded by him,) that he did not 'stagger at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform.' It was the Israelites' great offence that so incensed God, that 'they spake against God; saying, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?' Our Saviour on this account took it ill of his disciples, that in the greatest dangers they should be afraid, or in the least manner distrust. Since nothing is impossible, nothing difficult to him, (that can be done, or which he will promise,) we should not, in respect of any difficulty or improbability appearing, doubt in the least; it is injury to him, it is folly, it is blasphemy to do it.

2. We should hence dread God; fear to oppose his will, or provoke his displeasure. Is it not a madness for impotency (such as ours) to contend with or withstand Omnipotency, that can so easily crush us into misery, into nothing? 'Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?' (Jer. x. 6. 7.) 'Fear you not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea,' &c. (Jer. v. 22.) It is the argument by which Moses enforces obedience to the law, for that 'the Lord is a great God, a mighty and a terrible,' (Deut. x. 17.) Our Saviour admonishes and inculcates earnestly, 'Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; I say unto you, fear him.' (Luke xii. 5.) 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?' St. Paul urges; 'are we stronger than he?' No, let us follow St. Peter's advice, (1 Pet. v. 6.) and 'humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.' But I leave these and other applications, easily emergent from these points of doctrine, to your further meditation.

It may be demanded, why, beside that of 'Almighty,' no other attribute of God is expressed in our Creed; why, for instance, the perfections of infinite wisdom and goodness are therein omitted. I answer, 1. That all such perfections are

included in the notion of a God, whom, when we profess to believe, we consequently do ascribe them to him; for he that should profess to believe in God, not acknowleging those perfections, would be inconsistent and contradictious to himself; *Deum negaret*, as Tertullian speaks, *auferendo quod Dei est*;* he would deny God, withdrawing what belongs to God. 2. The title παντοκράτωρ, as implying God's universal providence in the preservation and government of the world, doth also involve or infer all divine perfections displayed therein; all that glorious majesty and excellency, for which he is with highest respect to be honored and worshipped by us; which added to the name of God doth determine what God we mean, such as doth in all perfection excel, and therewith doth govern the world. I might add, 3. That the doctrine of God's universal providence being not altogether so evident to natural light, as those attributes discovered in the world, (more having doubted thereof, and disputed against it with more plausibility,) it was therefore convenient to add it, as a matter of faith clearly and fully (as we did show) attested unto by divine revelation. So much may suffice to remove such a scruple. I proceed.

Maker of Heaven and Earth.

This clause is one of those which was of later times inserted into this Creed, none of the more ancient expositors thereof (Augustin, Ruffin, Maximus Taurinensis, Chrysologus, &c.) taking any notice thereof. But Irenæus, Tertullian, and other most ancient writers, in their rules of faith exhibit the sense thereof; and the confessions of all general councils (the Nicene, and those after it) express it. And there is great reason for it, not only thereby to disavow and descry those prodigious errors of Marcion and Manichæus, and other such heretics, which did then ascribe the creation of the world (or of some parts thereof, seeming to their fancy less good and perfect) to another God, (or principle,) inferior in worth and goodness to that God which is revealed in the gospel; or did opinionate two principles, (not distinct only, but contrary to each

* Adv. Marc. i. 3.

other,) from one whereof good things did proceed, from the other bad things. But also for that the creation of the world is that peculiar, august, and admirable work of God, by which we learn that he is, and what he is; by which, I say, his existence is most strongly proved, and in which his divine perfections are most conspicuously displayed; which is the prime foundation of his authority over the world, and consequently is the chief ground of natural religion; of our subjection and duty and devotion toward him. This title also most especially characterising and distinguishing that God whom we believe and adore from all false and fictitious deities: for, as the Psalmist sings, 'All the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens:' and the prophet Jeremiah; 'The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens:' 'And we preach unto you,' said St. Paul to the ignorant Lycaonians, 'that ye should turn from those vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth.' There was reason therefore more than sufficient that the Creed should be enlarged and enriched with this so material insertion; that we should be obliged explicitly to acknowlege a point of so grand consideration and use. For the explication whereof and the terms wherein it is conceived, we may observe, first, that the ancient Hebrews having (as it seems) in their language no one word properly signifying the world, (or universal system of things created,*) did use instead thereof a collection of its chief parts, (chief either absolutely in themselves, or in respect to us,) the heaven and the earth; adding sometimes the sea, (yea sometimes, for fuller explication, subjoining to heaven its host, to earth its fulness, to the sea its contents;) but most frequently heaven and earth are put to design the whole; 'In six days,' saith Moses, 'the Lord made heaven and earth:' 'Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord: It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than one tittle of the law to fail:' 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth:' where the

* Σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις περιεχομένων φύσεων: it is Aristotle's definition of the word.—De Mund. 2.

world, and all things therein, doth signify the same with heaven and earth, God's dominion being coextended with his creation, as being grounded thereon. By heaven and earth therefore, I say, we are to understand those two regions, superior and inferior, into which the whole frame of things is divided, together with all the beings that do reside in, belong unto, are comprehended by them; as we see sometimes fully expressed; 'O Lord, thou art the God that hast made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all things being in them,' pray the Apostles in the Acts; and with utmost distinction the angel in the Apocalypse 'swears by him that liveth for ever, who created the heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth with the things that therein are, and the sea with the things therein.'

By heaven is then understood all the superior region encompassing the earth, and from it on all sides extended to a distance unconceivably vast and spacious, with all its parts, furniture, and inhabitants; not only those that are visible and material, but also those that are immaterial and invisible. 'By him,' saith St. Paul, 'were created all things which are in heaven, and which are in earth, both those that are visible and those that are invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him:' that is, not only the material and sensible parts, (those bright and beautiful lamps of light exposed to our sight,) but those beings of a more pure and refined substance, indiscernible therefore to our sense, how eminent soever in nature, mighty in power, exalted in dignity, whose ordinary residence is in those superior regions, (as being God's courtiers and domestic officers, attending on and ministering unto him: 'encircling his throne,' as it is in the Apocalypse, and 'always beholding his face,' as our Saviour teaches us, Matt. xviii. 10.) even these all were made by God: for they are included in the universal term *all;* if God made all things in heaven, (as we heard it told us by the mouth of an angel in St. John's revelation,) then certainly the angels, (the most considerable things therein.) And they are expressly called the sons of God, (as deriving their being from him;) and they are subject to God's government and jurisdiction, (which argues their proceeding from him and de-

pendence on him :) and St. Jude tells us, they did not retain τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν; their beginning or primitive state: wherefore they had a beginning; and whence that but from God, who alone (originally, intrinsecally, and necessarily) hath immortality, and consequently (as Aristotle proveth by several reasons against Plato) alone hath eternity: and the psalmist calls them God's works; 'Bless the Lord,' saith he, 'ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word: bless the Lord, all his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure:' then concluding and recapitulating, he adds, 'Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion:' and again in the 148th Psalm, summoning all the creation to a consort of doxology, he begins with the heavens, and then proceeds to the earth, making a very particular recitation of the chief parts, and inhabitants belonging to each: and in the first place reckoning the angels, then the stars, then the heaven of heavens, he subjoins the reason why they ought all to praise God; 'Let them,' saith he, 'praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created; he hath also stablished them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree' (concerning them) 'which shall not pass.' Thus doth the Scripture teach us concerning the existence and original of those sublime beings, to the knowlege of whom (that they are, what they are, whence they are) natural light could not reach; although from primitive tradition even the heathens themselves did in a manner acknowlege this truth, calling all the inferior and secondary gods the children of the first and supreme God, as we did formerly touch, θεοὶ θεῶν ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρτε: so God speaks to them in Plato's Timæus. And for all other things, both in heaven and earth, the material frame of the world, with all its parts, (compacted together in so fair, so fit, so fast an order,) we have before sufficiently discoursed, that they speak themselves (even to natural understanding) to have been produced by a most wise, most powerful, most beneficent author; that is, by God; which is confirmed by testimonies of holy writ innumerable, and which need not to be repeated.

And thus much (as we did also formerly show) the generality of mankind hath always consented unto; as also the

most and best reputed philosophers did (in general terms) avow it. There is only one particular, wherein they seem to have disagreed (some or most of them) from what Christian piety obliges us to acknowlege; which concerns the matter of corporeal things: for even Plato himself (who so positively and expressly doth assert the world to have been framed by God) is yet conceived to suppose the matter of things to have been eternal and uncreated; ascribing only to God the forming and disposing it into a good order, agreeable to some patterns preexistent in his wise understanding; even as a good artist doth out of an unshapen lump of matter frame a handsome piece of work, conformable to some idea preconceived in his mind. (Socrates and Plato, saith Plutarch, did suppose three principles of things, *τὸν θεὸν, τὴν ὕλην, τὴν ἰθέαν*, God, Matter, Idea: God is the mind, Matter the first subject of generation and corruption, Idea an incorporeal subsistence in the conceptions of God. Anaxagoras also (the same author tells us, and Aristotle confirms it in his Metaphysics, commending his opinion) did affirm two principles, one passive, matter, (consisting of an infinite number of small particles like to one another in shape,) the other active, understanding; and to the same effect he reduces Pythagoras's conceits, though with much obscurity expressed.) And Aristotle tells us that generally all natural philosophers before him did conceive and assume it for a principle, (it was *κοινὴ δόξα τῶν φυσικῶν, ὡς οὐ γινομένου οὐδενὸς ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος*,) that nothing was made out of nothing, or that every thing made had necessarily some preexistent matter, out of which it was made; [which principle Aristotle himself not only admits,* in his sense, but extends farther, affirming it impossible, that any thing should be produced out of matter not predisposed to admit the form to be introduced, *Οὐδὲ γίνεται ὁτιοῦν ἐξ ὅτου οὖν*: Every thing is not made of every thing; but out of some subject fitted thereto, or capable thereof; as animals and plants out of their seeds.] Which principles, being deduced from observation of natural effects, (or works of art,) performed always by alterations and transpositions of some subjacent matter, we may safely, in respect only to such

* Phys. i. 5. 9. Vide locum luculentum. Metaph. i. 3.

kind of effects, admit; allowing no natural agent, no created artificer able to produce any thing without some subject, aptly qualified and prepared to receive its influence. But hence to conclude generally, that every action possible doth necessarily require a matter preexistent, or predisposed subject, is nowise reasonable; because such a thing doth not usually according to the course of nature happen, therefore it is in itself absolutely impossible to be, is no good collection; no logic will allow us from particular experiments to establish general conclusions; especially such as concern absolute impossibility of things to be otherwise than sometimes they appear to be: there may be, for all we can know, agents of another sort, and powers much differing in kind and manner of efficacy from those which are subject to our observation; especially to suppose the Supreme Being (that made the world) can himself act no otherwise, than we see these inferior things do, is grossly vain; nor from any certain principle of reason can it ever appear that it is impossible some substances should be totally produced *de novo*, or receive an existence which they had not. We cannot derive any such proposition from sense: it assures us that some effects are possible, but cannot help us to determine what is impossible: that which we see done is possible; but what we cannot perceive done, is not therefore impossible: nor can any reason of ours reach the extent of all powers and possibilities. That opinion therefore of the ancient philosophers, that the matter of the world, or of natural things, is eternal and uncreated, had no certain foundation: we may say to them, as our Saviour once did to the Sadducees; 'Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God:' and that their opinion was indeed false, and contrary to our faith, may appear, 1. Because it is so often generally affirmed in holy Scripture, that 'God did make all things; all things that are in heaven and in earth:' it is unsafe, and not without great reason ever to be done, to make limitations and restrictions of universal propositions, often (yea constantly) to set down. And like as St. Paul somewhere discourses; Because it is said in the prophets, 'Every one that believeth in him shall not be ashamed;' 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;' therefore both Jews and Greeks (in case of belief and calling on God) are

capable of salvation and acceptance, οὐ γάρ ἐστι διάστολή, for that there is no distinction or exception made; so it being said universally and without any limitation, all things were made, therefore the matter of things was also made; the matter being one thing, yea, in the opinion of most philosophers, as well ancient as modern, the principal thing, the only substantial thing in nature; all other things being only the modes and affections thereof. Whence Aristotle tells us that most of the first philosophers did affirm nothing to be made, nothing to be destroyed, because matter did always exist and abide the same; as if nothing else in nature had any being considerable. If God therefore did not produce matter itself, he could hardly be accounted author of any thing in nature: how then is he truly affirmed the maker of all things? 2. Again; God is in like manner affirmed generally the true possessor and proprietor of all things, excepting none: how so, if he did not make them? is not this expressed the foundation of his right and dominion? 'The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them:' how is God, I say, Lord and owner of matter, (at least by the most excellent sort of right,) but for that he did produce and doth sustain its being, and therefore may justly use and dispose of it according to his pleasure? 3. Again; supposing any being eternal, unmade, and independent on God, doth advance that being in some respect to an equality with God, (imparting those great attributes of God thereto,) and it deprives him of those perfections, making him to depend on it in his operations, and not all-sufficient in himself without it: it derogates from his prerogative, and limits his power. 4. Farther, as Aristotle well discourseth against the ancient philosophers, who, before Anaxagoras, did assign but one principle to things, (that material and passive one,) as if no active principle were required; so may we argue against him and them together; if God did produce and insert an active principle into nature, (as who can well imagine those admirable works of nature, the seminal propagation and nutrition of plants; the generation, motion, sense, appetite, passion of animals to be performed by a mere blind agitation of matter, without some active principle distinct from matter, disposing and determining it toward the produc-

tion of such specific effects?) if God could, I say, produce such an active principle, (such an ἐντελέχεια, to use the philosopher's word,) why might he not as well produce a passive one, such as the matter is? 5. Farther, if God did produce immaterial beings, (simple and uncompounded substances, distinct from all matter,) such as angels and the souls of men, merely out of nothing, (for out of what preexistent substance could they be made?) then may he as well create matter out of nothing. What greater difficulty can we conceive in making such a lower imperfect thing, than in making those more excellent beings, so much farther, as it were, removed from nonentity? If any thing be producible out of nothing, why not all things capable of existence, by a virtue omnipotent? But that such immaterial beings were produced by God, we saw before from many plain testimonies of divine revelation. 6. I add, that the manner of God's making the world, delivered in Scripture, by mere will and command; ('He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;') that by only pronouncing the word *fiat*, all things should be formed and constituted in their specific natures and perfections, doth argue that matter might be produced out of nothing by divine power: as also the effecting miracles, contrary to the course of nature, (without any preparation or predisposition of the suscipient matter,) in the same manner, (by saying only, as our Saviour did; Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι, 'I will; be thou cleansed: Woman great is thy faith:' Γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις, 'Be it to thee as thou desirest,') doth show the same. For it is nowise harder nor more impossible to produce matter itself, than to produce a form therein, without or against its aptitude to receive it: nay, it seems more difficult to make children to Abraham out of stones, than to make them out of nothing: there being a positive obstacle to be removed; here no resistance appearing; there being as well somewhat preceding to be destroyed, as something new to be produced. [Especially, I say, considering that God uses no other means or instruments in these productions, than his bare word and command; which why should we not conceive as able immediately to produce the matter, as the forms of things?] 7. Lastly, the text of Moses, describing the manner and order of the creation, doth insinuate this truth;

'In the beginning,' saith he, 'God made heaven and earth: now the earth was without form:' first it seems, God made the matter of heaven and earth, devoid of all form and order, a confused and unshapen mass; then he digested and distinguished its parts; by several degrees raising thence all those various kinds, those well arrayed hosts of goodly creatures. From these premises we may conclude (against those philosophers, who, destitute of the light of revelation, did conceive otherwise; and against such Christians as have followed them; as Hermogenes, whom Tertullian hath, on this occasion, writ a discourse against, and some Socinians, Volkeim, &c.) that God did create, (in the most strict and scholastical sense of that word,) produce out of nothing, either immediately or mediately bestow total existence on every thing that is, not excepting any one; and that this is the true meaning of these words, 'Maker of heaven and earth,' which is ascribed here to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; a truth, which all good Christians have always acknowleged, and the holy Scriptures do most plainly avouch, (for 'to us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we from him; and one Lord Jesus Christ,' (his Son,) 'by whom are all things, and we by him;') though Marcion of old (and other Gnostical heretics before and after him) did contradict it, affirming that the God who made the world, and enacted the Law, (whom Moses did declare,) was a worse conditioned, a rigid and angry God; but the God of the gospel was another more benign and harmless God, void of all wrath and spleen. [Tertullian thus in verse describes this conceit:

Prædicat hic duos esse patres, divisaque regna,
Esse mali causam Dominum qui condidit orbem;
Quique figuravit carnem spiramine vivam;
Quique dedit legem, et vatum qui voce locutus;
Hunc negat esse bonum, justum tamen esse fatetur,
Crudelem, durum, belli cui sæva voluptas,
Judicio horrendum, precibus mansuescere nullis.
Esse alium suadens, nulli qui cognitus unquam,
Hunc ait esse bonum, nullum qui judicat, æque
Sed spargit cunctis vitam, non invidet ulli.]

Adv. Marc. Poem. 1.

Of affinity to this was the error of the Manichees, who supposed two first causes of things, one of good, the other of bad, taken, it seems, from the Persian, Egyptian, or other Ethnical doctrines, which to this purpose we may see recited by Plutarch, in his tractate *de Iside et Osiride:* the Persian, from Zoroaster, he tells us, had their Oromazes and Arimanius; the Egyptians their Osiris and Typhon; the Chaldeans their good and bad planets; the Greeks their Zeus and Hades; the Pythagoreans their *Μονὰς* and *Δυὰς*; Empedocles his Concord and Discord, &c. The common reason or ground on which erroneous conceits were built was this; that there being in nature some things imperfect and bad, these could not proceed from perfect goodness; it would have produced all things in highest perfection and in indefectible state of goodness. (If, discourseth Plutarch there, expressing the main of their argument, nothing naturally can arise without a cause, and good cannot afford causality to evil, it is necessary that nature should have a proper seed and principle of evil, as well as good; and thus it seems to the most and wisest: for they indeed conceive two Gods, as it were, counterplotting each other; one the contriver and producer of good things, and the other of bad; calling the better one, God; the other, Demon.)

But this discourse hath two great faults: it supposeth something imperfect and evil, which is not truly so; and that which is truly imperfect and evil it assigneth to a wrong cause: it supposeth some things according to their original constitution imperfect and evil, which is false: there was no creature which did not at first pass the divine approbation; 'God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.' Good; that is, convenient and suitable to its design, fair and decent in its place and proportion: very good; that is, altogether perfect in its degree, without any blemish or flaw, not liable to any just exception. There be indeed degrees of perfection, (it was fit there should be such in great variety, that things might commend and illustrate each other;) some things may comparatively be said to be imperfect, or less excellent in respect of others, but nothing is positively bad or imperfect, void of that perfection due to its nature and kind. Every thing contributes something to the use and ornament of the whole; no weed

that grows out of the earth, no worm that creeps on the ground, but hath its beauty, and yields some profit; nothing is despicable or abominable, though all things not alike admirable and amiable. There is nothing therefore unfit or unworthy to have proceeded from God; nothing which doth not in some sort and degree confer to the manifestation of his glorious wisdom, power, and goodness. 'O Lord,' saith the devout psalmist, after particular consideration of them, 'how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches:' 'He created all things, that they might have their being: and the generations of the world were healthful; and there is no poison or destruction in them,' saith the Hebrew wise man.

As for those real imperfections and evils, (moral evils, habitual distempers, irregular actions, with all the mischiefs consequent on them,) we need not seek any one eternal cause for them; (though order and uniformity do, disorder and confusion do not, argue any unity of cause whence they should proceed;) the true causes of them are notorious enough: men, (or other intellectual agents,) their voluntarily declining from the way God doth prescribe them; disobeying his laws and precepts, transgressing the dictates of their own reasons, abusing their own faculties, perverting themselves and others, (by their bad example, persuasion, allurement, or violence;) these causes of such evils are most visible and palpable; they are called our ways, our works, our inventions; they are imputed altogether to us; we are blamed, we are punished for them. Nor need we to inquire any other principle of them; (no Arimanius, no uncreated Cacodæmon, no eternal Fate to father them on.)

As for other evils of grief and pain, incident to the nature or consequent on the actions of any being, they are such as God himself (without any derogation to his goodness) may in his wisdom or justice be author of, for ends sometimes apparent to our understanding, sometimes surpassing its reach; it may suffice that God challengeth to himself the being cause of them: 'Shall there be any evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' 'Doth not evil and good proceed out of the mouth of the Most High?' 'I am the Lord, and there is none else: I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create

evil; I the Lord do all these things.' For these evils, therefore, it is in vain to search for any other cause than God's just providence. But I will not trouble you farther in considering the mistakes of those blind philosophers or blasphemous heretics.

I will only briefly touch on a consideration or two (concerning the manner how and the reason why God did make the world) which will commend it to us, and ground somewhat of our duty, and direct our practice in respect thereto. The manner of God's producing the world was altogether voluntary, absolutely free: it did not proceed from him as heat doth from the fire, or light from the sun, by a natural or necessary emanation, (as some philosophers have conceited, some later Platonists, and some Stoics,) but from his wise counsel and free choice. (He could have abstained from making the world; he could have made it otherwise.) 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημα σοῦ, and for (or by) thy will (or pleasure) they are and were created,' say the elders in the Revelation. It is the property of God, St. Paul tells us, 'to perform all things according to the counsel of his will.' He could not be fatally determined, there being no superior cause to constrain him. He could not be obliged to impart any perfection, being master of all, and debtor to none: it would destroy all ground of our thankfulness and devotion, if God was not a free agent. And it is plain, if the world had been produced by necessary emanation, that it should have been eternal; as if the sun had been eternal, the light had been so. But that the world was produced in time, and that not long since, (within five or six thousand years,) not only faith and divine chronology assure us, but reason also shows, and all history conspires to make us believe; there being no monuments or probable memory of actions beyond that time; and by what progressions mankind was propagated and dispersed over the world, how and when and where nations were planted, and empires raised, and cities built, and arts invented or improved, it is easy enough to trace near the original times and places. The world therefore in respect of time conceivable by us, is very young; and not many successions of men's lives have passed

between its beginning and ours: whence it is evident that it was freely produced by God. And how he produced it the Scripture farther teaches us; not with any laborious care or toil; not with help of any engines or instruments subservient; not by inducing any preparatory dispositions, but ψιλῷ τῷ βούλεσθαι, (as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks,) by his mere will and word; (these were the hands, as Tertullian expounds it,* by which it is said 'God made the heavens;') at his call they did all immediately spring up out of nothing; at his command they obediently ranged themselves into order. It was not only a high strain of rhetoric in Moses, (as Longinus supposed,) but a most proper expression of that incomprehensible efficacy which attends the divine will and decree.

But (since God did not only make the world freely, but wisely, and all wise agents act to some purpose, aim at some end) why did God make the world? it may be asked; what reason induced him thereto? I answer with Plato, ἀγαθὸς ἦν, (*Quæris quid propositum sit Deo? Bonitas: ita certe Plato ait; Quæ Deo faciendi mundum causa fuit? Bonus est, nulle cujusquam boni invidia est:*†) He was good: his natural benignity and munificence was the only motive that incited (or invited) him to this great action of imparting existence and suitable perfection to his creatures respectively. No benefit or emolument could hence accrue to him; no accession of beatitude: he did not need any profit or pleasure from without himself, being full within, rich in all perfection, completely happy in the contemplation and enjoyment of himself. Our goodness doth not extend to God; we cannot anywise advance or amplify him thereby: 'Can a man,' saith Eliphaz, (can any creature,) 'be profitable to God?' No: goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of itself; love is active and fruitful; highest excellence is void of all envy and selfishness and tenacity: these being intrinsecal to God's nature, ('for God is love,' that is, essentially loving and good,) did dispose him to bestow so much of being, beauty, delight, and comfort on his creatures. Hence, 'The earth,' saith the psalmist, 'is full of the goodness of the Lord;' that is, every creature therein is an effect thereof,

* Adv. Herm. 45. † Sen. Epist. 65.

partakes thereof in its being and enjoyments. 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;' his tender mercies, *rachamavi*, his bowels of affection;) good and tender over all his works, as well in producing them as preserving them; in rendering them at first capable to receive good, as in providing for and dispensing good unto them. 'That thou givest them they gather;' (it is spoken in respect to the whole university of creatures;) 'thou openest thy hand, they are all filled with good:' it is from God's open hand (his immense bounty and liberality) all creatures do receive all that good which fills and satiates them. A glimpse of which truth the ancient heathens seemed to have when they delivered, (as Aristotle tells us,*) that love was the original principle of things: [πρώτιστον μὲν ἔρωτα θεῶν μεθίσατο πάντων, is a verse he cites out of Parmenides.]

But I will not insist longer on this point; only I shall briefly touch some uses the belief and consideration thereof will afford to us.

The belief thereof must necessarily beget in us the highest esteem, admiration, and adoration of God and his excellences. What a power must that be (how unconceivably great, both intensively and extensively!) that could erect so speedily, so easily, such a stupendously vast frame, (vast beyond the reach of our sense, of our imagination, of any rational collection we can make,) the earth we dwell on, divided into so many great empires, full of so many inhabitants, bearing such variety of creatures different in kind, having in respect to the whole but the like proportion as a little sand to the earth itself, or a drop to the great ocean! What a wisdom must that be, (how incomprehensibly large and penetrant,) that could contrive such an innumerable number of creatures, (the artifice that appears in one in the least of which doth so far transcend our conceit,) could digest them so fitly, and connect them so firmly in such order! What a goodness and benignity must it be (how immense and boundless) that did extend itself in affection and care for so many creatures, providing abundantly for the needs and comfort of them all! How transcendently glorious is the

* Metaph. i. 4.

majesty of him that was author of all those beauties and strengths, those splendors and magnificences, we with so much pleasure and so much astonishment behold! Well might the devout psalmist and the divine prophets hence so often take occasion to excite us to praise and celebrate the perfections of God. Well might even heathen philosophers, from the contemplation of the world, be raised unto the composing of hymns and elogies of the great Maker of the world.

It also will confer to the begetting of humble love and affection and gratitude toward God. What can be more efficacious to this purpose than to consider that all we have, all we with so much content and pleasure enjoy, (ourselves first, then all the accommodations and comforts we find,) did proceed from him; did proceed with particular intention from especial good-will toward us; a most free good-will, moved with no merit of ours, no profit to himself; 'When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?' was the psalmist's contemplation: that the author of so great and glorious a work should vouchsafe to regard so mean a thing as we, to visit us with a provident care of our welfare; what a demonstration of admirable condescension, grace, and goodness is this! What an argument of love and thankfulness toward him! What is man? what, in comparison of him that made the world? What is our strength in respect of his, what our wit, what our goodness, what any quality of ours? How weak, vain, narrow, poor, and wretched creatures must we needs seem to ourselves, when we seriously consider those excellences displayed in the creation! How should this humble and depress us in our conceits concerning ourselves, especially if we reflect on our ingratitude, our unprofitableness, our injustice toward the author thereof; how none, or how scant returns we have made to him, who gave to us and all things their being, their all; how faint in our acknowlegements, how negligent in our service we have been; how frequently we have opposed his will and abused his goodness! Farther, it is an inducement to trust and hope in God, and a great consolation in all needs and distresses. He that was able to do so great things, and was willing to do so much for us; he that because he made all

things can dispose of all, and doth whatever pleaseth him in heaven and earth; shall we distrust or doubt of his protection and succor in our need? 'My help,' saith the psalmist, 'cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth:' well might he be assured, having recourse to so potent and faithful an aid: and again; 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God; which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is.' The prophet Jeremiah begins his prayer thus; 'O Lord God, behold thou hast made heaven and earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.' The creation of the world is such an experiment of God's power and goodness, as may well support our faith in the greatest difficulties and distresses. It is, finally, a general incitement to all obedience, which, from God's production of all things, doth appear due and reasonable. All other things obey the law imposed on them, insist in the course prescribed to them; and shall we be only disobedient and refractory, irregular and exorbitant? shall all the hosts of heaven readily and punctually obey God's summons; shall the pillars of heaven tremble, and be astonished at his reproof; shall the sea, with its proud waves, be confined by his decree; shall fire and hail, snow and vapor, and stormy winds, (such rude and boisterous things,) fulfil his words; and shall we be unruly and rebellious? But I leave the farther improvement of this doctrine to your meditation, concluding with that exhortation of the angel in the Revelation; 'Fear God, and give glory to him: worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water:' even to him be all obedience, adoration, and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE first part of the Creed, concerning God the Father, we have largely insisted on: the next in order (as is fit) succeeds that part thereof, which relates to his ever blessed Son, our Lord and Saviour; the faith in whom, that is, the believing him to be what he professed himself, what he and his first disciples did teach concerning him, is the principal and peculiar duty of our religion as Christian, and distinct from all other religions; the sum of which doctrine is contained in what fol-

lows; wherein our Saviour, the object of this faith, is described and determined unto us, first, by his proper name, Jesus; next, by his most notable and comprehensive title, Christ; then, by his relations, unto God first, his only Son, then unto us, our Lord; lastly, by several illustrious accidents and circumstances appertaining to him, (his conception, nativity, passion, crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand:) which particulars I shall endeavor to prosecute somewhat more briefly.

Jesus.

THIS name, (not unusual among the Jews, for we read of divers in Scripture that bear it, who, according to his name, saith Siracides, was great for the saving of God's elect; Jesus the son of Justus, Jesus the son of Sirach, Bar-Jesus; and especially the famous Jesus the son of Nun; and many others so named occur in Josephus;) this name, I say, was, by God's direction, imposed on our Saviour at his circumcision, for the significancy of it, as importing the performance of that great design for which he was sent into the world, the salvation of mankind from sin and misery; (for it is said, 'The Son of man came to save the souls of men, and to save that which was lost:' 'That God sent him into the world not to condemn the world; but that the world by him should be saved:' 'That he came into the world to save sinners:') this is the reason rendered by the angel of this name being assigned to him. 'She shall bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins:' from their sins, taking in all the causes and consequences of them; from all those spiritual enemies which draw or drive us into them; from the guilt and obnoxiousness to punishment, the terror and anguish of conscience, the wrath and displeasure of God following on them, the slavery under their dominion, the final condemnation and sufferance of grievous pains for them: from all these mischiefs he came to free and save us from, and did actually perform his part in accomplishing that salvation; and was therefore properly called Jesus, or the Saviour. 'To save us from our enemies,' (I say,) 'and from the hands of all that hate us,'

(so Zechariah in his Benedictus:) from the devil first; 'For this purpose,' saith St. John, 'the Son of God did appear, that he might dissolve the works of the devil;' those works of tempting and impelling us to sin: 'He went about,' saith St. Peter, 'doing benefits, and healing all that were overpowered (or overruled) by the devil,' (possessed by him, whether in body or mind:) 'By his death,' the author to the Hebrews tells us, 'he did defeat him who had the power of death,' that is, the devil. He combated and conquered this strong one, (this dreadful and mighty foe of ours,) and bound him, and disarmed him of his panoply, and spoiled all his baggage, leaving him unable (without our own fault, our baseness or negligence) to do us mischief (as is insinuated in Matt. xii. and Luke xi.) Our own fleshly desire, inclining us to vicious excess in sensual enjoyments, (another powerful and mischievous enemy of ours,) he by his grace (enlightening and strengthening us) doth save us from; 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' saith St. Paul, 'hath freed me from the law of sin and death:' and the world, (which often solicits and sometimes would force us to wickedness,) he delivers us from, vanquishing it in our behalf; 'Be of good courage,' saith he, 'for I have overcome the world:' 'In all these things (in the temptations and persecutions of all our enemies) we do more than conquer, through Christ that loved us.' As for our conscience, it is the blood of Christ that cleanses it from the stain of guilt, that delivers it from the fear of punishment, as the Apostle to the Hebrews doth assure us. And the wrath of God toward us he hath appeased; so that 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:' and, 'If, being enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life:' we shall be saved from all condemnation and vengeance due to us; for 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—Jesus, that delivers us from the wrath to come.' In so many respects is this blessed Person our Jesus; saving us from all our enemies, our sins, our miseries; which he performs several ways, and in several respects may therefore be styled our Saviour.

1. By his conduct of us into and in the way of salvation. It is a very proper title, and most due to those brave captains,

who by their wisdom and valor have freed their people from straits and oppressions. So generally were those judges and captains, who anciently delivered Israel, called; 'In the time of their trouble,' said the Levites in their prayer in Nehemiah, 'when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of the enemy:' so particularly are Othniel and Ehud called, and Moses signally; 'The same,' saith St. Stephen, 'did God send to be (ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν) a commander and a saviour,' (or redeemer;) as he who by his happy conduct did free them from Egyptian slavery. So is Jesus called ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας, ('the Captain of our salvation,' Heb. ii. 10.) ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς, ('the Captain of life, the chief Leader of us into the way of eternal life and salvation,' Acts iii. 15.) ἀρχηγὸς πίστεως, ('the Captain of our faith,' he that brought us into the belief of that saving doctrine, which is 'the power of God to salvation,' Heb. xii. 2. Rom. i. 16.) and these titles we find together attributed to him, (Acts v. 31.) 'Him hath God exhalted, ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα, as a Captain and Saviour.' And thus hath he conducted us first by instruction, showing and teaching us the way of salvation, (the doing of which we see often called saving, because it hath so much efficacy towards the effecting salvation,) God's gracious intentions of mercy toward us, the conditions of duty required by God from us, the great encouragements to saving obedience and determents from destructive disobedience; the whole will of God, and concernment of man respecting salvation, he hath revealed unto us; 'No man hath ever seen God, (not his face or nature, not his purpose and pleasure,) the only begotten Son, being in the bosom of the Father, (ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο,) he hath reported and expounded him unto us:' all that excellent doctrine, which he that heartily believes and faithfully practises according to, shall infallibly be saved, he was the first author and doctor of: 'God saved and called us,' as St. Paul tells us, 'with a holy call,' (called us out of the way of error and wickedness and misery, into the way of truth and righteousness and happiness,) 'according to his purpose and grace, (his gracious design,) that was bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before the world began;' but being now made manifest by the appearing

of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. By him the σωτήριος χάρις ('the grace of God that bringeth salvation') 'did appear unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and piously, in this world.' Neither by his doctrine only, but by his example and real performance he hath conducted us in the same blessed path: he hath resolutely marched before us through all the most difficult and dangerous passages; charging, beating back, and breaking through all the forces of our enemies; enduring painfully the most furious assaults of the world, and powerfully subduing the most malicious rage of hell. 'O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ.' Victory and salvation (from death and hell) we shall be certain of, if we 'pursue his steps,' and do not basely or falsely desert so good a leader; 'If with patience we run the race that is set before us, looking unto the captain and perfecter of our faith, Jesus; who for the joy proposed unto him endured the cross, despised the shame, and hath set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Would it not raise and inflame any courage, to see his Commander adventure so boldly on all dangers, to endure so willingly all hardships?

2. But he was also farther (in a more excellent and peculiar manner) our Saviour, in that he purchased for us salvation, freeing us from the captivity we were detained in, from the obnoxiousness to punishment we were subjected to, by yielding himself a ransom for us, offering his life a sacrifice for our sins, procuring by his merit and suffering, in our stead and behalf, the pardon of our sins, and reconciliation with God. 'Him,' say Peter and the Apostles, 'hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.' He gave himself, ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, (a ransom instead of all:) 'We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:' 'He bare himself our sins in his own body on the tree:' 'He by the eternal Spirit offered up himself a spotless sacrifice to God, being thereby a propitiation for our sins and the sins of the whole world:' 'God by him did recon-

cile the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their transgressions.' Thus doth the Scripture declare Jesus to have been our Saviour: for he not only leads us in the way, but (as a gracious reward of our faithful and constant adherence to him) has given us the promise of eternal joy and happiness.

3. He is, thirdly, our Saviour by communication of spiritual strength and power, whereby we are enabled to resist and overcome the enemies of our soul and our salvation, freeing us from the dominion of sin and Satan. Our own reason, however aided by exterior instruction and excitement, being unable to deal with those powerful temptations, oppositions, and discouragements we are to encounter with, he hath given us a wise and powerful Spirit, to guide and advise us, to excite and encourage us, to relieve and succor us, in all our religious practice and welfare; so that all deliverance from the prevalency of temptation and sin we owe to his grace and assistance. By our faithful embracing Christ's doctrine and yoke, 'our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, so that we henceforth should not serve sin.' Sin shall no longer lord it over us, because we 'are not under the law, but under grace: being freed from sin, we are subjected to righteousness, and made servants to God; having our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life:' 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed us from the law of sin and of death.' Thus is Jesus our Saviour.

4. He is so, lastly, by final conferring on us and crowning us with salvation. He not only led us in the way, and hath purchased for us the means, and helps us in the prosecution, and hath promised unto us, but will actually bestow on us, (as a gracious reward of our faithful and constant adherence to him,) eternal joy and happiness; 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that shall have loved his appearance.' 'He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' 'Thou hast given him' (thou, O Father, to thy Son Jesus hast given) 'the power of all flesh, that he should give

eternal life to all that thou hast given him,' (that is, to all who by God's grace have persisted in faithful obedience to him.) 'The glory which thou hast given me, I have given unto them.' Thus is he the ἀρχηγὸς καὶ τελειωτὴς, the beginner, carrier on, and accomplisher of our salvation; and therefore most appositely was named Jesus; the name which anciently that most valiant and successful captain did bear, who did of all most livelily represent and presignify him, and had therefore questionless by God's secret providence this name assigned him.

I need not now much to mind you what respect, what love, what gratitude the very mention of this name, the consideration of these benefits toward us implied thereby, should beget in us. He that should freely, with great inconvenience to himself, come out of his own way, to show us ours, bringing us out of a road tending unto certain destruction into a most pleasant and safe way, surely leading unto the end of our desires, we should think ourselves much obliged unto: he that should draw us out of a wretched slavery, destitute of all ease, comfort, or hope, by frankly yielding up himself a ransom for us, we could not know how sufficiently to value his kindness toward us: he that, when we were sentenced to death, (a death of torment endless and remediless,) should not only expose his life for our delivery, but undergo willingly a painful and disgraceful execution in our stead; what should we think of his friendship? what expression could reach it? he, lastly, that from a state of extreme penury, baseness, and disconsolacy, should raise us to the highest pitch of wealth, dignity, and happiness, how could we worthily thank him, how love or honor him enough? This and much more, much more than we can conceive or express, hath Jesus done for us; well therefore ought our hearts to melt with affection in thinking of him, our knees to bend with reverence at the mention of his name. It concerns us also to take care that his so excellent endeavors for our salvation be not frustrated; that he be, as well in effect as design and virtue, our Saviour. What a folly were it, what a crime to neglect (to render useless and ineffectual) so great salvation!

Christ.

It is a title or name importing office and dignity, the same with Messias; this in Greek, that in Hebrew signifying The Anointed. Of ancient times, in the eastern countries, (abounding as with good oil, so with many delicate odoriferous spices,) it seems, by Hazael's inunction, to have been the manner (it was so, however, among the Jews) to separate (or consecrate) persons (and things too, I might add) designed to great and extraordinary employments, by anointing them with ointments composed of those ingredients; symbolising, (or devoting,) it seems, thereby both a plentiful effusion on them of gifts, qualifying them for their employment, and a comfortable and pleasant diffusion of good and grateful effects expected from them, from the use of things and the performances of persons so sanctified. 'Thy name,' saith the Spouse in the Canticles, 'is an ointment poured forth:' that is, very delightful and acceptable; and so were those offices hoped to be, to which men by such unction were consecrated. We find especially three sorts of persons to whom this consecration did belong by divine appointment; kings, and priests, and prophets; who are therefore (all of them) styled God's anointed; kings and priests more frequently, but sometimes also prophets; 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm;' where prophets and anointed do seem to denote the same thing, and to expound one the other; for Abraham (whom with the other patriarchs those words do concern) is called a prophet, and because so, seems here styled God's anointed. Of priests, (though at first all the sons of Aaron were thus consecrated, according to that law, Exod. xxx. 30.) 'Thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office;' yet they tell us that afterward, in all course of times, only the high-priest was so consecrated, whence the anointed, or the priest that is anointed, did signify the high-priest, (in distinction to other inferior priests.) Of kings; all that succeeded in the kingdom of Israel, in a legal and orderly course, and those whom God did himself by extraordinary designation confer that dignity on, were so separated, (as Hazael and Jehu.) Prophets; we do not find that they were commonly, or according

to any rule, anointed; but one plain instance we have of Elisha substituted to Elijah in this manner, it seems, as being a prophet more than ordinary, endued with higher gifts, and designed to greater performances than common prophets were. Now whereas the people of the Jews were by prophetical admonitions brought into an opinion and hope that in times to come God would send an extraordinary prophet; 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him;' a prophet who should establish a new covenant with the house of Israel, and is therefore called 'the messenger of the covenant,' (Mal. i. 3.) who should propagate the knowlege and worship of God, should enlighten and convert the Gentiles, who should instruct the ignorant, strengthen the faint, comfort the afflicted, according to many passages concerning him in the prophets; as for instance that in Isaiah lxi. 1. cited by St. Luke, (Luke iv. 18.) 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,' &c. and that in the same prophet, chap. xlii. 1. alleged by St. Matthew, (Matt. xii. 18.) 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit on him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: he shall not cry,' &c.: which being inspired, is the qualification of a prophet: and such promulgation of God's will, such ministration of comfort and counsel from God, are the proper offices of a prophet, (that is, of an especial minister and agent sent by God to transact his affairs with men, and show them his pleasure.) This Person also the Jews did from the same instructions expect to be a Prince, who should govern them in righteousness and in prosperity; endued with power to deliver them from all oppression and slavery, to subdue their enemies, and reduce all nations under subjection to their laws; according to those predictions; Isaiah xxxii. 1. 'Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness,' &c. Psalm cx. 2. 'The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies:' Jer. xxiii. 5. and xxxiii. 15. 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; and a King shall reign and pros-

per, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely;' and Jer. xxx. 8. 'It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them:' Isa. xi. 1. 10. 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall be on him,' &c.—'he shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious:' and many more places clearly speak to the same purpose. That this great Person also should be a Priest, they did or might have learned from the same prophets; for of him Zechariah thus foretold; 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold the man whose name is The Branch,' (a name in so many places appropriated to the Messias;) 'and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on his throne; and he shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.' Of him also David spake; 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' From divers passages also concerning his performances of propitiation and benediction, they might have collected the same. It is no wonder then that the ancient Jews (although the text of Scripture does not, except once in the 9th of Daniel, apply this name of Christ or Messias to this person, so promised and prophecied of) did attribute especially this title to him, it seeming most proper of any, and most comprehensive, implying all the privileges, endowments, and performances belonging to them. It is observed that the Chaldee paraphrase (composed by the priests, as an interpretation of the less exactly understood ancient Hebrew Scripture, for the benefit and instruction of the people) doth expressly mention the Messias in above seventy places; and according to their expositions we see that the people did confidently expect a person (under this name and notion) should come: 'I know,' said the woman of Samaria, (so far had this belief extended,) 'that the

Messias comes; and when he shall come, he will tell us all things;' (observe that they did promise to themselves a full declaration of all truth by the Messias.) And when St. John the Baptist did live and teach in a manner extraordinary, it is said, 'That the people did expect, and all men mused in their hearts concerning him, whether he were the Christ or not:' and when our Saviour's admirable works and discourses had convinced divers, they said, 'When Christ cometh, shall he do greater miracles than this man hath done?' So that it is evident the belief and expectation of a Messias to come was general among them. And that indeed Jesus was such, in correspondency to all those prophecies, and the characters in them described and presignified; that he was signally chosen and consecrated by God, in a manner supereminent, to all these offices, prophetical, regal, and sacerdotal, the New Testament doth abundantly show us; 'Him,' saith St. Peter, in general, 'God anointed with the Holy Spirit and power:' not with external affusion of material oil, (that did only signify, as Cyrus also was not, who yet is called God's Messias,) but with real infusion of divine grace and power, enabling him to execute all those great and extraordinary functions: with this gladsome oil he was thoroughly perfumed and replenished without measure: with this he was sanctified from the womb; when the 'power of the Highest did overshadow him,' at or in his conception, with this, at his baptism, he was solemnly and visibly inaugurated; when the heavens were opened unto him, and the Spirit of God 'descended on him as a dove, and came on him:' with this, in all the course of his life and ministry, he was continually accompanied; the virtue of it being in most sensible effects of wise and gracious discourse, holy and blameless conversation, miraculous and glorious performances for the good and benefit of mankind, to the delight and consolation of all well-disposed minds, discovered and diffused. He was by this made (in right and in effect) a prophet, a king, a priest. 1. A prophet: for they were not mistaken, who (on our Saviour's admirable raising the widow's child) were 'amazed, and glorified God, saying, That a great prophet was raised up among them,' and that 'God had visited his people:' nor the disciples, who called him 'a prophet, mighty in deed and

speech before God and all the people:' nor they, who confessed, (in St. John's gospel,) 'This is in truth the prophet that is to come into the world.' An extraordinary commission he had from God, declared by vocal attestation of God himself from heaven, by the express testimony of St. John Baptist, by the performance of innumerable great signs and miraculous works, (arguments in the highest degree, to utmost possibility, sufficient to assert and confirm it:) he was in greatest perfection qualified for the exercise of that function; by inspiration complete and unlimited, by disposition of mind altogether pure and holy, declared in a continual practice of life void of all sin and guile, by an insuperable courage and constancy, an incomparable meekness and patience, a most winning goodness and sweetness, a transcendent wisdom and discretion, a most powerful awfulness and majesty expressed in all his demeanor and actions. And suitable to the authority of his commission and the qualifications of his person was the weight and the extent of his doctrine concerning no less than the salvation of mankind, the reconciliation of God to the world, the intire will of God and whole duty of man, with all the covenants and conditions, the promises and threatenings relating to our future state; mysteries never before revealed, decrees never to be reversed. He did not (as other prophets have done) prophesy about the constitution of one particular law or religion, the reproof or reformation of one state, the judgment and fate determined to this or that nation; but to the instruction and conversion of all people, the settling of a law universal and perpetual, the final doom of all the world, did his prophetical revelations extend. So was he a prophet. 2. And a king also he is, such as the prophets foretold he should be, who should 'raise the tabernacle of David that was fallen, and restore the kingdom to Israel,' (Acts i. 6.) that should enact laws, and reduce the nations into subjection to them; should erect a kingdom, and govern it in righteousness, peace, and prosperity, subduing and extirpating all the enemies thereof: [a King not of this world, though over it; ruling not in external pomp and state, but by secret providence and power, not so much over the bodies and temporal estates, as in the hearts and consciences of men; not chiefly by outward compulsion and violence, but

by inward allurement and persuasion :] a King he is indeed over all the world: to the Lamb is to be 'ascribed all power and authority by every creature:' he is truly styled 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.' God hath advanced him, (ὑπερύψωσε,) and hath 'given him a name' (that is, a title of dignity and authority) 'above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, whether of things in heaven, or on the earth, or under the ground.' Of him in a higher and exacter sense it was said than of Solomon, 'All kings fall down before him, all nations do serve him.' All men whatever (all creatures) are his vassals, subject and tributary to him; 'All power is given unto him in heaven and earth.' But in especial manner he is King over his church, over that people whom by the sword of his word and prevalent operation of his Spirit he hath subdued to himself, (that mystical Sion, built on the rock of his heavenly grace and truth, in which it is said God will place his residence, and reign for ever; from whence the law shall go forth, and to which all nations shall flow.) Over this he reigns; having established most righteous and wholesome laws, which his subjects are obliged and enabled by him to obey; protecting them by legislation, by defence and protection, &c. from the invasions and insurrections of their enemies, (intestine enemies, their own lusts; outward enemies, the devil and the world;) supporting them in their distresses and afflictions: also exercising judgment over all; distributing fit rewards and punishments with exquisite justice and equity; most just though very severe punishments on obstinate offenders; most royal and liberal rewards to the faithful and obedient: lastly, restrainnig, defeating, and destroying all the enemies to his royal dignity, and to the welfare of his good subjects, both visible and invisible, temporal and spiritual. 'Out of his mouth there goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:' 'These mine enemies,' (he shall one day say,) 'which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me:' 'He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' Thus is he a King, endued with sovereign power, and crowned with glorious majesty, enjoying all preeminences and exercising all functions suitable to regal dignity. 3. He is

also a Priest, and that no ordinary one: διαφορωτέρας τέτευχε λειτουργίας: he hath obtained a more excellent function than any other Priest ever had. An oblation he once offered, in worth and efficacy surpassing all the sacrifices and oblations that ever were or could be made, (all the fattest hecatombs that were ever sacrificed, all the gold and precious stones that were ever offered, all the spices and perfumes that ever were kindled on the altar, were but vile and sordid, ineffectual and unacceptable, in comparison thereto;) a willing oblation of his own most glorious body, (the temple of the Divinity;) of his most precious blood; of his dear life; of himself; his most innocent, most pure, most spotless, and unblemished self, for the propitiation of our sins, and reconciling us to God; an oblation that only could appease God's wrath and merit his favor.

He doth also (which is another sacerdotal performance) intercede for the pardon of our sins; 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with (or to) the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;' for the acceptance of our services, for the granting our requests, for grace and assistance, comfort and reward, and all spiritual advantages to be conferred on us; thus pursuing the work of salvation by his propitiatory sacrifice begun for us; 'Whence,' as the Apostle saith, 'he is able to save to the uttermost those that by him come unto God, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.' It is the duty also of a priest to mediate between God and man by atonement and intercession; so is he.

He doth farther, as a priest, perform the office of blessing; blessing the people in God's name, blessing God in the people's behalf; as did that illustrious type of him, Melchizedek; ('Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.') So hath Jesus effectually pronounced all joy and happiness to his faithful people; he pronounced blessedness in his sermons; he blessed his disciples at his parting: 'And God,' as St. Peter tells us, 'having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless us, in turning away every one of us from his iniquity;' and at the last day he will utter that comfortable benediction; 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;' as the great Prophet and Doctor, as the

sovereign King and Prince, as the High Priest and Advocate of his Church. So in all respects is Jesus a true and perfect Priest; and so, finally, in all respects, is he God's anointed, the Christ of God: and indeed that he is so is the fundamental point of our religion; which the Apostles did testify, and preach, and labor to persuade the world of; the sincere belief of which doth constitute and denominate us Christians; the consideration of which may serve to beget in us a practice answerable to our relations grounded thereon. If he be such a Prophet, we must with attention and a docile mind hearken to his admonitions and instructions; we must yield a steady belief to his doctrine; we must readily practise what he teaches us. If he be our King, we must perform all due allegiance to him, pay him honor and reverence, submit to his laws and commandments, repose trust and confidence in him, fly to his protection and assistance in all our difficulties and needs. If he be our Priest, we must apply ourselves to him for, and rely on, his spiritual ministries in our behalf, sue for and expect propitiation of our sins by his sacrifice, the collation of all spiritual gifts from his intercession, all spiritual comfort, joy, and felicity in consequence on his efficacious benediction; 'Having' (it is the Apostle to the Hebrews his admonition) 'a great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.' In a word, if Jesus be Christ, let us be Christians; Christians, not in name only, in outward profession, in our opinion; but in very deed and reality; in our heart, in our affection, in our practice. 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ' (that confesseth him to be so) 'depart from iniquity.'

His only Son.

THAT the Messias designed by God to come for the restoring of the Church and reformation of the world, was in especial manner to be the Son of God, seems to have been the common persuasion of the ancient Jews before our Saviour's appearance; as may be collected from divers expressions then used, wherein being the Christ, and being the Son of God, are conjoined as inseparable adjuncts of the same Person: as in the confessions of Nathanael; 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the

King of Israel:' of Martha; 'I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world:' of St. Peter; 'We have believed, and have known that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God:' and especially by that examination of the high-priest; 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.' And that our Saviour was indeed so, the New Testament doth everywhere teach us; calling him not only at large the Son of God, but his μονογενὴς, (his only begotten Son;) his ἀγαπητὸς, (his darling Son;) his πρωτότοκος, (his first-born;) his ἴδιος υἱὸς, (his proper and peculiar Son:) those epithets all implying somewhat of peculiar eminency in the kind and ground of this relation. Adam is called the son of God; and the angels are so entitled; and princes are somewhere styled the children of the Most High; and all men, especially all good men, yea all things, have God, in some sense, their Father: but all these in a manner (if we compare them with Christ's relation) are improper and inferior; for he is the only Son (or the only begotten Son) of God. Now we find indeed several reasons and respects for which he is called the Son of God: he is so in regard of his temporal generation, by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary: so the angel doth expressly tell us; 'The Holy Ghost shall come on thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God:' a generation so wonderful and peculiar, without intervention of any father but God, is one ground of this relation and title. He is also capable of this title by reason of that high office, the which by God's special designation and appointment he was instated in. If ordinary princes and judges (as being deputed by God to represent himself in dispensation of justice, as resembling him in exercise of power and authority) have been called gods, and the children of the Most High, in the holy Scripture itself; with how much greater reason and truth may he (whom God hath sanctified and sent into the world, hath consecrated and commissionated to the most eminent and extraordinary office) be so called? It is our Saviour's own argumentation. He is also in regard of his resurrection by the divine power (which is a kind of generation, or a rege-

neration to another immortal life) so styled: if others are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection, how much more he, who is the firstborn from the dead? And that of the psalmist concerning Christ, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' according to St. Paul's exposition, was fulfilled by God's raising Jesus (Acts xiii. 33.) again. Whereas it is said that God did appoint or make our Saviour 'heir of all things;' did 'put all things under his feet;' did 'give him power over all flesh;' did 'commit to him all authority in heaven and on the earth, having set him at his right hand;' hath exalted him to the next place of authority and dignity to himself, ('the right hand of the Majesty in the highest;') and given him 'a name above every name;' well may he in this respect be entitled the Son of God, as having obtained the rank and privilege proper to this relation; ('If a son, then an heir,' St. Paul argues; and reciprocally, if constituted heir of all, then in that regard a son, Rom. viii. 17.) In such respects is our Saviour properly, or may be fitly, styled the Son of God. But his being so expressly called God's only begotten Son doth imply a ground more peculiar and more excellent (than any of these) of this relation, (as do also those especial prerogatives of affection and favor from God appropriated to him, with all the glorious preferment consequent thence argue the same.) For the first Adam also derived his being immediately from God's power and divine inspiration; Isaac, Samuel, and John the Baptist, had a generation extraordinary and miraculous, (as being born of aged fathers or barren mothers, by the interposition of divine power;) and we cannot easily conceive how the production of angels should be so much inferior to our Saviour's temporal generation, (supposing he had no other.) And our Saviour, though he were the first and chief, yet was not the only son of the resurrection; nor doth the arbitrary collation of power and dignity, how eminent soever, seem to suffice: for we see others, in regard to their designment and deputation to offices of power and trust, (though subordinate and inferior to him,) entitled the sons of God: (beside, that this is ground of a metaphorical rather than a natural and proper sonship:) and though our Saviour be the heir of all things, yet hath he coheirs; whom,

as St. Paul speaks, 'God hath together enlivened, and together raised, and together seated with him in thrones of glory and bliss.' In these respects God hath many sons, (as the author to the Hebrews tells us,) and our Saviour many brethren, (as it is in Romans viii.) We should therefore seek a more excellent and proper foundation of this only Sonship; and such we may deduce from the testimony of divine writ. It is evident thence that our Saviour had an existence before his temporal generation; for he did descend from heaven, and was there before he did descend; (his ascension was but a returning thither, whence he had descended at his incarnation;) he was before St. John the Baptist; and therefore, as St. John confesses, was worthily preferred before him. Before Abraham was born, he did subsist; (and therefore might without any absurdity affirm, that Abraham and he did see each other, might have intercourse together, as his own discourse with the Jews doth declare:) nay farther, it is plain he was of standing, and had a glory before the world had a being: for he prays thus; 'And now, Father, glorify me with thyself with the glory which I had before the world was with thee:' (glory; that is, a most honorable state of being and excellent perfection was not only designed him, but he really had it before the world was:) and needs must it be so; for by him God made the world; and himself made it: 'By him,' saith St. Paul, 'were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.' (He did not only create anew and reform mankind, but he created all things; and among them all degrees of angels, all things in heaven; such things as the new metaphorical creation did not extend unto.) 'All things were made by him,' (or did exist by him,) 'and without him there was not any thing made which was made,' saith St. John: (and what could be said more expressly or clearly?) In fine, he did exist from all eternity: πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως; that is, born before all the creation: as, 'In the beginning was the Word:' in the beginning; that is, before any point of time designable or conceivable; that is, from eternity: whence he is truly styled,

'the first and the last,' (ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος,) and Alpha and Omega, several times in St. John's Revelation; (a phrase by which God's eternity and immortality are usually expressed.) He had therefore a being before his temporal generation, and that before all creatures, even from eternity: therefore that being was divine: if no creature, if author of all creatures, if eternally subsistent, then God: that action is proper, that attribute is peculiar to God; only God can be the Creator of all things: (he that built all things is God; none but God can be eternal; he only hath immortality, and only therefore hath eternity:) he is consequently said, before he did assume the 'form of a servant, and became like unto men,' to have subsisted in 'the form of God, and not to have deemed it robbery to be equal (or in equality) to God;' (so that as he was after his incarnation truly man, partaker of man's nature and properties, so before it he was truly God, partaker of the divine essence and attributes;) and therefore he is frequently in the Scriptures called God, (in the most proper and highest sense:) 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' God is said to have been manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, assumed into glory; (of which positions it is evident that the subject is Christ; he is therefore called God.) God is also said, by St. Paul, to 'have purchased his Church with his own blood;' who else did that but Christ? 'My Lord and my God;' so St. Thomas expressed his faith in Christ, (on his conviction,) which our Saviour accepts and approves as a proper testimony thereof. Also; 'We are,' saith St. John, 'in the true one,' (the God of truth,) 'in his Son Jesus Christ.' This he, is the true God, and life eternal, (no false, no metaphorical God, but the very true, supreme, ever-living God;) 'out of whom,' saith St. Paul, 'as concerning the flesh' (according to his humanity,) 'Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever; (ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς,) the God over all, the supreme God, the Most High: God, blessed for ever;' the ὁ εὐλογητὸς, the blessed one, (which is a special and characteristical attribute or title of God.) Now this proper appellation, with the majesty and worship due thereto, as also the title of Lord and King, King of kings, and Lord of

lords, with the reverence and authority attending them; likewise the most divine works of creation and providence, and judging the world; immediate working of miracles, remitting of sins; the divine attributes of wise, good, powerful, absolutely and perfectly; in a word, all things that the Father hath, (according to what our Saviour affirmed, 'All things that the Father hath are mine;') we cannot imagine that God, who is so jealous of his honor, (who will not give his glory to another,) would communicate to any creature, how eminent soever in nature, (for the highest creature possible must however be infinitely distant from, infinitely inferior to, himself in perfection and dignity; nor can any be capable of it in nature, or in reason and justice accept such names, such characters, such prerogatives.) Now our Saviour being thus God, and the whole tenor of our religion (with testimonies of Scripture frequent and obvious) asserting but one God, therefore our Saviour hath the same essence with God; and it must be necessarily true what himself affirms; 'I and the Father are one,' (John x. 30.) Yet hath he not this essence of himself, but by communication; for 'as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself.' (John v. 26.) He is the 'image of the invisible God,' (an image most perfectly like, because having the very same nature,) an effulgency of his glory, and a character (or perfect impression) of his substance; and this eternal communication of the same divine essence is that generation, in respect of which he is most properly and truly the only begotten Son of God. If to produce a being like, (in any kind or degree,) be to generate; to impart a being without any dissimilitude or disparity at all, perfectly the same, is the most proper generation: and that none other (beside our Saviour) was so begotten, in any manner like or comparable to this, is evident enough; for that as no reason could have taught us that our Saviour himself was thus begotten, so no revelation hath showed us that any other was. By creation things receive a being from God infinitely different, unlike, and unequal to the being of God; and that filiation which is grounded on adoption and grace is wholly diverse from this: and the communication of the divine essence to the Holy Ghost doth so differ in manner from this, (though the manner be in-

comprehensible to us,) that it is never called generation in Scripture, and therefore we must not presume it to be so. But so much for explication of the point. For application briefly: the consideration of this point will serve to instruct and confirm our faith concerning the mystery of our redemption; to direct and heighten our devotion; to raise in us a due gratitude toward God; to beget hope and comfort in us.

1. We may first hence learn whence the undertaking of Christ (his performances and his sufferings for us) become of so great worth and efficacy. It is no wonder that God's only Son's mediation should be so acceptable and effectual with God; that his blood should be so precious in God's sight, and his intercession so prevalent with him. What could God deny his own Son, 'the Son of his love,' so earnestly entreating in our behalf? What debts might not so rich a price discharge? What anger could not so dear a sacrifice appease? What justice should so full a compensation not satisfy? We were not redeemed with gold; all the Indies had not been able to ransom a soul; all the hecatombs in the world cannot satisfy for a peccadillo. Well might a person so infinitely worthy and excellent be a sufficient ransom for whole worlds of miserable offenders and captives; well might his voluntary suffering a bitter and disgraceful death countervail the deserved punishment of all mankind, if our displeasing and dishonoring a Person so great, so good, doth aggravate our offence; the equal excellency and dignity of the Person submitting in our behalf to justice and performance of satisfaction, may proportionably advance the reparation, and countervail the injury done. Well therefore may we believe and say with the Apostle, 'Who shall criminate against the elect of God? It is God that justifieth;' (the Son of God, as himself God, that satisfies justice for us:) 'Who is there that condemns? It is Christ that hath died for us.'

2. We learn what reverence and adoration is due to our Saviour; and why we must 'honor the Son, even as we honor the Father,' (as himself hath taught us to do.) Whence it is, that in St. John's Revelation every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, did (and ought to) say,

'Blessing, honor, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever,' (ascribing the same preeminency, and paying the same veneration jointly to God Almighty, and to the Lamb his blessed Son;) why, not we men only, (whom he hath particularly purchased and redeemed,) but even 'all things in heaven and earth, and beneath the earth,' must bend the knee (yield worship and observance) to him; when the 'firstbegotten is brought into the world,' it is said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' We are (we see) obliged to ascribe divine glory, to yield divine adoration, to Christ: Why? Because he is the only Son of God, equal in majesty, one in essence with him. Were he not so, it were injury to God and sacrilege to do it: God would not impart his glory, we should not yield it to another.

3. We hence may perceive the infinite goodness of God unto us, and our obligation to love, and answerable thankfulness toward him. 'God commendeth his love toward us,' saith St. Paul, 'in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:' 'In this,' saith St. John, 'was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this is love,' (love indeed, admirable and inconceivable,) 'not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his only begotten Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' Can there be imagined any equal, any like expression of kindness, of mercy, of condescension, of goodness, as for a prince (himself perfectly glorious and happy) freely to deliver up his own only most dearly beloved Son, (out from his bosom of glory and bliss,) to suffer most base contumelies, most grievous torments, for the welfare of his declared enemies, traitors, and rebels? Such hath been God's goodness to us, suitable thereto should our gratitude be toward him.

4. This consideration fitly serves to beget in us hope in God on all occasions of our need or distress; as also comfort in all our afflictions. 'He hath so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son' for its salvation and happiness; how can he be supposed unwilling to bestow whatever else shall appear needful or beneficial for us? He that parted with a jewel so inestimable in charity and pity toward us, to him no other thing can seem much to give us: it is St. Paul's consolatory

discourse; 'He that did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' [All things that we need, that we can reasonably desire, that will be good and fit for us.]

5. I might add the use which St. John (1 John iv. 11.) makes of this consideration; 'Beloved,' saith he, 'if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another:' if God so lovingly gave up his only Son for us; what, (in respect, in gratitude, in imitation of him;) what expressions, I say, of charity and good-will ought we to yield toward our brethren? what endeavors, what goods, what life of ours should be too dear for us to impart for their good? So much for this point. It follows,

Our Lord.

As the name of God is by a mysterious kind of peculiarity attributed to the Father, so is the name of Lord to the Son; who is sometimes called absolutely the Lord, (or the Lord Jesus,) sometimes our Lord; to acknowlege and call him so being the special duty and character of a Christian: 'There be' (saith St. Paul; there be, according to popular or worldly use) 'gods many, and lords many, but to us there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ:' and 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all things;' (are by us Christians professed:) and, 'No man can call Jesus Lord, (that is, cordially embrace Christianity,) but by the Holy Ghost.' The reason of which peculiar appellation may be, because, beside that natural dominion over us appertaining to Christ as our God and Maker, that title is in several other respects, and on other grounds, due to him. In what notion soever we take lord, as a governor over subjects, as a master over servants, as an owner of goods, as a master of disciples, as a leader of followers, he is according to all such notions our Lord: consider him in whatever respect or capacity, as God, as man, as Θεάνθρωπος, (God and man united; as Jesus, as Christ,) he is our Lord. Examine all foundations imaginable of just dominion: eminence of nature, of power, derivation of being, with the preservation and maintenance thereof; donation, acquisition, desert, purchase, redemption, conquest, com-

pact, and resignation of ourselves; on them all his right of lordship over us is justly grounded. As God he is our Lord: endued with supreme authority and irresistible power, also hath made all things, and upholds all things; and therefore all things are subject to his disposal, (to be governed, and possessed, and used according to his pleasure;) hence that most peculiar and august name of God, Jehovah, (denoting either independency and indefectibility in subsistence, or uncontrollable and infallible efficacy in action; both together; and therefore fitly rendered Κύριος by the Seventy Interpreters, and Lord by our translators,) is attributed to him; 'This is his name,' saith the prophet, 'whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness;' and what is in the Old Testament spoken of Jehovah, is in the New Testament by infallible exposition applied to him: as, for instance, what Malachi did foretel concerning Elias, 'that he should prepare the way of Jehovah,' was verified in St. John Baptist's preparing the way to our Saviour. As man also God did confer on him lordship; a power and authority of ruling and judging; of remitting offences; and punishing and rewarding: the Father hath given him authority even to execute judgment, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶν, 'because (or whereas) he is the Son of man:' and, 'Let all the house of Israel,' saith St. Peter, 'know assuredly, that God hath made him Lord and Christ,' (even) 'this Jesus, whom you did crucify:' and, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and reward every man according to his works:' and, 'Being found in shape as a man, he humbled himself,' saith St. Paul, 'becoming obedient unto death, the death of the cross; therefore also did God exalt him—that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord:' and again; 'To this end Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living:' and, 'God raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church:' 'Thou hast given him power over all

flesh.' Thus hath God in him performed more signally and eminently what the psalmist thankfully acknowleges and praises him for in regard to man; 'Thou crownedst him with glory and honor; and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.' As God-man he is also Lord, and Lord of lords; whatever naturally did belong to God; whatever freely was conferred on man, (by way of gift or reward,) did accrue to the Person, and was consequent on the union hypostatical; so that, in this respect, Christ is eternally Lord; Lord, indeed, of all, as St. Peter styles him, having all things (excepting God himself, as St. Paul teaches us) put under his feet; but particularly (which most concerns us to acknowlege and consider) our Lord; and that on several grounds, which it will be convenient briefly to touch. An intire power over us, and a perfect ability to govern us, he hath; in which respects it is both necessary to submit to him, and reasonable willingly to admit him as our Lord: (persons so qualified, Aristotle himself in his Politics tells us, have a natural title to dominion; as on the contrary, persons weak, or unwise, unable to protect themselves, and unfit to manage things to their own good, are naturally subjects and servants.) Also, he hath made us, and he preserves us; all we are or have is wholly derived from and depends on him; whence he hath an absolute right to dispose of and use us according to his discretion and pleasure. He is the Son of God, is heir apparent, and natural Lord of all things; and so our Lord, by birth and privilege of nature. But farther: he hath also acquired us to himself, (adding a legal to a natural right;) we are called περιποίησις, (an acquist made by him;) and λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, (a people appertaining to, or by, acquisition.) Divers ways hath Christ acquired us: by donation from God; 'Whom thou hast given me,' saith he to his Father, 'I have kept:' and, 'This is the will of the Father that sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing.' So we fall under by conquest; conquest over his enemies; conquest over us ourselves, being his enemies; we were (partly by violence, partly by consent) enslaved to his enemies, and lived in obedience to them: them hath Christ quite vanquished and subdued, (having 'spoiled those principa-

lities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them ;') and so we rightfully fall under subjection to him, as accessions to his victory, and formerly belonging to his enemies: yea, ourselves, being, as St. Paul speaks, ἐχθροὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ, enemies in our mind and discourse, (discovering our enmity by wicked, disobedient, and rebellious practices,) did he subdue by the power of his word and Spirit: whence, as it is in the Benedictus, 'being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,' (his enemies, and ours in truth and effect,) we may, we should serve him without fear: being *servati*, we become *servi;* being *subacti*, we are *subditi*. He might have justly destroyed us, deprived us of liberty and life, as dependents on and partisans of his enemies; as ourselves being in actual hostility against him: but seeing he hath saved us, we thereby become his vassals. But farther, he hath purchased us: he hath delivered up himself a ransom and a price for us; and so hath acquired us, hath redeemed us, hath bought us with his own blood: we having forfeited our lives to God's law, and being sentenced to a miserable death; he procured our redemption by himself undergoing equivalent punishment, discharging our debt, and satisfying the divine justice for us: whence, as St. Paul argues, 'we are not our own; for we were bought with a price;' we are his, who saved our lives, freed us from captivity, drew us out of extreme and endless misery; ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες, 'that we (now) living should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again:' in requital for mercies and favors so unexpressibly great, we cannot (not in gratitude only, but in justice) owe less than ourselves; ourselves to be rendered wholly into his dominion and disposal. He hath also acquired lordship over us, by desert and as a reward agreeable to his performances, of obedience and patience highly satisfactory and acceptable to God; 'He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the cross: therefore also did God exalt him, and gave him a name above every name:' 'To this end Christ both died, rose, and revived, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ, that he might exercise lordship over both the dead and living:' 'He drank of the brook in the way: therefore he hath lift up his head:' 'Therefore did God divide him a portion with the great, and he did divide the spoil with the

strong, because he poured out his soul to death:' 'And we see Jesus,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'for his sufferance of death, crowned with glory and honor.' I may add, that he hath acquired a right and title over us, as our continual benefactor, by the benefits he bestows, and the hire he pays us: he affords us sure protection, liberal maintenance, ample wages, (great privileges under, rich rewards) for our service; 'Knowing,' saith St. Paul, 'that ye shall' (in regard to your obedience) 'receive τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν κληρονομίας, (the recompense of an inheritance:) for ye serve the Lord Christ.' It is no Egyptian bondage that he detains us under; requiring hard labor, and yielding no comfort or recompense; but a most beneficial and fruitful service. 'Doth Job fear God for nought?' the Devil could not but observe and envy the benefits and blessings the pious man received in regard of his faithful service. Christ hath promised to withhold no good thing from his servants; nothing necessary for the support or comfort even of this temporal life; but especially most inestimably precious recompenses he will bestow in spiritual and eternal blessings: 'He will render to every man according to his works: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:' and, 'Being freed from sin, and made servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification; and in the end everlasting life:' [a fruit to sanctification, (all benefits conducing to our spiritual welfare here,) and hereafter a life in perpetual joy and happiness:] to them who have been diligent and faithful in performing their tasks, and improving the talents committed to them for his interest, he will one day say, *Euge, bone serve*, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into thy Master's joy:' 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great shall your reward be in heaven.' And he that is at such care and charges for us; who feeds and furnishes us so plentifully; who rewards our small pains, our poor works, our improfitable services, with so high and bountiful wages; him sure most justly we should esteem, most willingly call, our good Lord and Master.

But yet farther, he is not only our Lord by nature, by ac-

quisition, by manifold deserts and performances of his; but by our deeds also, by most formal and solemn, most free and voluntary, and therefore most obligatory, acts of ours: he is our Lord and King by election: finding ourselves oppressed by our cruel enemies, (groaning under intolerable slaveries to sin and Satan,) we had recourse to him on his gracious invitation, offering us ease and refreshment under his most gentle and equal government; 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke on you—for my yoke is easy, and my burden light.' So he invited us; and so we did (or did at least pretend to) undergo his yoke, and freely submit to his government: we vowed allegiance and fealty to him as our lawful prince; promised subjection to his will, and obedience to his laws; engaged (forsaking all things) to follow him, and fight under his banners against the common enemies of his glory and our salvation: we contracted with him, on certain conditions and considerations, (most advantageous to ourselves,) to be his obedient and faithful servants; not only renouncing all other masters, but resigning up all pretence to liberty or power over ourselves; becoming absolutely subject to his will and command: this we did at our baptism in most express and solemn manner: and in every religious performance we confirm our obligation; by acknowleging his right over us, and our duty toward him; by imploring his princely protection, and succor, and mercy on us; and by promising our humble respect and obedience toward him. On so many grounds is Jesus Christ the Son of God our Lord. The general influence of which doctrine on our practice is very obvious and palpable.

1. If we do truly believe Christ our Lord, we must conceive ourselves obliged to observe and submit to his will; to attend unto and obey his law; 'Why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' It is a vain and absurd profession (an irrational and illusive pretence) we make, when we confess and invoke him as our Lord, and disavow his authority in our practice. 'Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;' (shall obtain the reward assigned to a faithful servant; but he that really performs the duty of one; that does the will of God.) 'Do ye not know,'

saith St. Paul, 'that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey?' We forfeit all pretence to the very name (as well as to the rewards and privileges) of Christ's servants, if we disobey his commands; being really servants to the lusts which sway us; to the devil, whose suggestions and pleasure we comply with. We do but usurp the name of Christians, if our practice be not conformable to the laws of Christ.

2. If Christ be our Lord, then are we not our own lords, not our own men; and therefore must not think to have our own will and do our own business; please our own appetites, or gratify our desires; except in subordination and reference to his service; 'We are not our own,' saith St. Paul; 'for we are bought with a price:' (we are by nature, by manifold acquisition, by free choice and compact his:) 'For this end Christ died,' (and performed all for us,) 'that they which live, may not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died and rose again for them:' 'Whether we live, or whether we die,' (whatever actions we undertake, relating either to life or death,) 'we are the Lord's,' and should direct all to his glory, his profit, his service.

3. If Christ be our Lord, (absolutely our Lord,) then can we have no other lords; none in opposition to, none in competition with him; none but in subserviency and respect to him; 'No man,' our Saviour tells us, 'can serve two lords' (with collateral and equal observance.) Serving riches, or honors, or pleasures, is inconsistent with our duty to Christ; 'He that doth not forsake all that he hath, cannot be his disciple, or servant,' (Luke xiv. 33.) Nor can we therefore please and humor men; obeying any command, or complying with any desire, or following any custom of theirs, contrary to Christ's will and precept, 'If I did yet please (or soothe) men,' saith St. Paul, 'I were not the servant of Christ:' 'Ye are bought with a price; be not (or you are not) the servants of men;' that is, do not (or ye ought not to) perform service with ultimate relation to men, but out of conscience to Christ, as his servants. We may, we are bound to obey men humbly, and willingly, and diligently, and faithfully, in our stations, and according to our conditions, as subjects or servants; but this in subordination to

our supreme and principal Lord; 'Servants,' saith St. Paul, 'obey your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling,' (that is, humbly and respectfully,) 'in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the soul; serving with good-will, as to the Lord, and not to men:' 'Yea, whatsoever,' saith the same wise instructor, 'ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive back the recompense of inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.'

4. It is, we see, (which may be another use of this point,) not only an engagement, but an encouragement to the performance of all duty, particularly to those hard duties of cheerful obedience and submission to men, (who are sometimes, as St. Peter intimates to us, σκολιοὶ, somewhat untoward and harsh in their dealings with their servants,) that therein do we serve a most equal and gentle Master, who will graciously accept our service, and abundantly requite it; a Lord, that will not suffer his servants to want any needful sustenance, any fit encouragement, any just protection or assistance; who will not only faithfully pay them their promised allowance, but raise them to the highest preferment imaginable. It is a great comfort also for a Christian (how mean soever he be in this world) to consider this relation of his; how great, how good a Master he doth serve; that the greatest princes, that the highest angels, are his fellow-servants; yet that his gracious Lord will not despise or neglect him. St. Paul also makes use of this consideration to press on superiors their duties toward their inferiors; their duties of equity, meekness, kindness, mercy, pity, and all humanity; 'Masters,' saith he, 'yield unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven:' 'And, ye masters, do the same things to them, (to your servants,) forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; and there is no respect of persons with him:' 'Thou hast not despised the lowliness of thy handmaid.' And we see how our Saviour, as he doth commend and bless those faithful and wise servants, who being appointed over his household, (placed in any superior rank and office,) do behave themselves justly and kindly to their fellowservants, dispensing

them their food in due season; so those which beat and abuse their fellowservants; that are rigorous and unmerciful in their exactions of debt, or other dealing toward their fellowservants, he denounces severe punishment and vengeance on.

The farther consideration of this point our Saviour improves as an engagement to imitate him; especially in charity, in humility, in patience; it is proper for a servant to follow, to attend on in all places and performances, to compose himself to the example, to conform to the garb and condition of his master. Were it not absurd that the servant should be more stately, or more delicate than his master; that he should despise those whom his master vouchsafes to regard; that he should refuse to undertake those employments, should disdain to undergo those hardships, his master doth condescend to? To such purpose our Saviour discourses; 'Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' And having directed his disciples to the patient enduring of reproaches, affronts, and injuries put on them, he enforces his precept by subjoining, 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant is not above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his Lord.' (He ought in reason to be very well content, if he find such usage as his Lord hath willingly and patiently undergone.)

Full of many such practical uses is this excellent doctrine; the which I leave to be deduced by your private meditation.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

THE proper name, special title, principal relations of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, (the peculiar grand object of our Christian faith, wherein was included or implied what did especially respect his divinity, so far as it is revealed unto or may be comprehended by us,) being hitherto expressed, and in some manner explained and applied by us, we proceed to that which follows; those illustrious accidents, or passages and circumstances, chiefly agreeing to his humanity, (what he

undertook and underwent, performed and enjoyed, in our nature and in our behalf,) being here orderly set down; partly for the full and clear description or determination of his person; partly on design to insinuate those principal doctrines, (depending on or involved in those passages,) wherein the mystery of our religion doth consist; which we are chiefly obliged to believe, and which have great influence on our practice. In the first place (as good order did require) is delivered the manner of his nativity, (that is, of his incarnation, or assuming human nature,) which in the ancient creeds (as we see in the texts of ancient expositors) was expressed more simply thus: *Qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine;* who was born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. The alteration seems to have been made more distinctly to express the operation of the Holy Ghost in the generation of our Saviour, and what the blessed Virgin his mother did confer thereto. We know in ordinary procreation the influence of the father doth not extend beyond the quickening of the mother's womb, whatever that influence be; (for it is a deep and inscrutable mystery of natute, (exceeding perhaps the reach of all human philosophy,) whether it contain an imparting of somewhat material, or be only the inserting an active vital principle;) the effect of which influence is called conception; the word agreeing in some propriety both to the mother, which is said to conceive, and to the child, which is conceived; the farther perfecting the work of generation (by forming the *fœtus* from its initial rudiments into a due integrity and fit disposition of parts, nourishing, increasing, and excluding thereof) no farther immediately depending on the father, but being carried on by the concurrence of what was first imparted by him, and what is thenceforth communicated by the mother. In regard to which performances, the mother is said τίκτειν; that is, both *gignere* and *parere;* to conceive, bear, and to bring forth: (for τίκτειν doth import as much as γεννᾶν, all that a parent doth confer to generation; whence both parents are called τοκεῖς; and τέκνον, a child, is used indifferently as relating to both.) Now to express that influence or efficacy the divine Spirit had in the generation of our Saviour as man, by which God himself did in a manner supply the place of a father, it was set down, 'conceived by the Holy

Ghost;' and when it is said, 'born of the Virgin Mary,' what the blessed Virgin, as mother, did confer thereto, is to be understood: and the occasion perhaps of thus expressing the thing was that saying of the angel to the Virgin, (in the 1st of St. Luke,) 'Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth (συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ, καὶ τέξῃ) a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.' But whatever was the reason or occasion of this expression, it is evident that the proposition and assertion of these truths was intended: 1. that our Saviour was conceived and born; 2. that his conception was effected without any influence of man, only by the power of God and operation of the Holy Ghost; 3. that the blessed Virgin Mary did, by the Holy Ghost, conceive, and bear, and bring him forth. Let us reflect and observe somewhat on each of these propositions.

1. Our Saviour was conceived and born: he, (the person before mentioned,) Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord; the same who was in the beginning, and did from all eternity exist with God, the eternal Son of God, by whom all things were made, was in the fulness of time conceived and born; that is, had a production agreeable to the nature of man, and became thereby truly and intirely man; which wonderful mystery is in Scripture variously expressed or implied by, the Word's being made, or becoming, flesh; God being manifested in the flesh; taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as man; assuming the seed of Abraham; partaking of flesh and blood; descending from heaven; God sending his Son into the world, in likeness of sinful flesh, coming in the flesh. The result of what is signified by these and the like expressions being this; that he which before from all eternity did subsist in the form or nature of God, being the Son of God, did by a temporal generation truly become man; assuming human nature into the unity of his Person, by a conjunction and union thereof with the divine nature incomprehensible and ineffable: he truly became man, I say, 'like unto us in all things, sin only excepted;' consisting of body and soul, endued with all faculties, and subject to all passions, infirmities, necessities consequent on or incident to our nature. He did not only seem in shape and

outward appearance, (as a spectre, deluding men's sight and fancy,) but was in perfect truth a man; having a real body; circumscribed and figured like ours, compacted of flesh and blood; that might be seen and felt; that was nourished and grew; that needed and received sustenance; that was frail and tender; passible and sensible; was bruised with blows; torn with scourges; pricked with thorns; pierced with nails; transfixed with an injurious spear. He had a soul too, endued with suitable faculties; an understanding capable of improvement; (for he grew in wisdom, in stature;) a will subject and submissive; he was ignorant (as man) of something he might know; to the divine will; ('Let this cup pass from me, if it be thy will: but, however, not my will, but thine be done:' and, 'I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me.') Appetites of meat, drink, sleep, and rest: several passions and affections, φυσικὰ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη, natural, irreprehensible passions; and those of the most troublesome and afflictive sort, anger, grief, and pity; and these sometimes expressed by most pathetical significations, in groans and tears. On occasion of his friend Lazarus's death, it is said, 'He groaned in spirit, and was troubled, and wept:' and ye know what heaviness, agonies, excesses of sorrow, disturbances, and amazements, (they are terms used by the Evangelists,) he underwent before his passion: so that, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh, 'We have not an high-priest that could not so compassionate' (or sympathise with) 'our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted' (or proved and exercised) 'as we are;' (yet without sin.)

Thus did the Son of God (coeternal and coessential to his Father) become the Son of man, (truly and intirely of the nature and substance of man;) deficient in no essential part; devoid of no human property; exempt from no imperfection or inconvenience consequent on our nature, (except only sin.)

If you demand the manner how and the reason why God thus became man; as to the first (the manner) we must answer, that we can hardly otherwise than by negation determine, not otherwise than by comparison explain it: no words perhaps we use, to signify our conceptions about these lower things, can perfectly and adequately suit to a mystery so far different from

common objects of our knowlege, so far transcending our capacity; yet we must affirm that whatever manner of conceiving or expressing it doth derogate from the divine perfections, or is repugnant to the nature of things, disagrees from the tenor of divine truths, (connected unto or depending on this mystery,) or contradicts (directly or obliquely, immediately or by plain consequence) the language and doctrine of the Scriptures, is to be rejected by us: we may therefore say with the Council of Chalcedon, that in this incarnation of our Lord the divine and human nature were in his Person united, ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως.

Ἀσυγχύτως, without commixtion or confusion, (for that would induce a third nature different from both,) such as results from the composition or contemperation of the elements into a mixed body; so that he should be neither God nor man: but I know not what other kind of being, without any ground or authority to be supposed, that would destroy, diminish, or alter the properties belonging to each; neither can we conceive the divine nature capable of any such diminution or alteration.

Ἀτρέπτως, without conversion, or transmutation of one nature into the other: not of the divinity into humanity: for how could God, as God, be changed or made, become infirm and passible, consist of body and soul, suffer and die? Not of the humanity into divinity: for how could that, before it did exist at all, be turned into another thing? why should our Saviour be called man, when his humanity was transmuted into the divinity? why is it said, 'the Word was made flesh,' if the flesh was changed into the Word? To omit how unimaginable it is, that one substance should be turned into another, especially that a finite substance should be turned into an infinite one; also to omit many dangerous consequences of this opinion, and its inconsistency with many great and plain doctrines of our religion.

Ἀδιαιρέτως, undividedly: so that the two natures have not distinct subsistences, nor do constitute two persons; for there is but one Christ, one Person, to whom, being God and man, are truly and properly attributed.

Ἀχωρίστως, inseparably; the natures being never separated; the union never dissolved; the same Person never ceasing to

be both God and man; no, not when, as man, he suffered and died: for he raised himself from the dead; he reared the temple of his own body, being fallen: as continuing God, he was able to raise himself as man: as being man, he was capable of being raised by himself as God; the union between God and man persisting, when the union between the human body and soul was dissolved.

I might add farther, exclusively; that this union of the two natures was not made κατὰ παράστασιν (by assistance or close presence) only; nor κατ' ἐνοίκησιν, (by way of inhabitation;) nor κατὰ σχέσιν, (by relation;) κατ' ἀξίαν, (by dignity or esteem;) κατὰ ταυτοβουλίαν, or καθ' ἁρμονίαν, (by consent, or conformity of will and counsel;) as Nestorius and such ancient heterodox dogmatists, in opposition to the Catholic expositions of this mystery, did conceit: but it is scarce worth mentioning those antiquated opinions: I cannot longer dwell here: I shall only subjoin, (omitting others more wide and improper; as those of Bellarmine, the union of a man's arm to his body; the incision of a bough into a tree, and such like,) that nature doth afford us one comparison fit to explain or illustrate the manner of this mysterious union; which is the union of man's soul and body, by which he becomes one person. The soul and body are two substances, very different in kind, properties, and dignity, (the one material, extended, divisible, corruptible, passive, lifeless, and senseless; the other immaterial, indivisible, incorruptible, self-moving, endued with life, knowlege, passion,) capable also both of separate existence and subsistence by themselves; yet are these (though in a manner difficult for us to imagine or comprehend) united together, and concur to the constitution of a man, (and that so as to remain still in substance distinct, retaining each its natural properties, without any confusion, or conversion of one into the other; so also that a man is truly from them denominated both corporeal and spiritual, mortal and immortal:) in like manner (though more admirably and incomprehensibly) are the divine and human nature united in the Son of God: for, (as we read in Athanasius's Creed,) as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

So much for the manner how: as for the reason why the Son

of God did thus condescend to assume our nature, if we inquire the impulsive cause that moved him thereto, it was only God's infinite goodness, mercy, and pity towards us; ('So God loved the world, that he thus sent his only begotten Son:') it was the χρηστότης and φιλανθρωπία, the beneficence and philanthropy, (if I may so speak,) of God, that induced him by such a debasement, as it were, and an exinanition of himself, to save us. If we desire to contemplate the wisdom of God in this admirable proceeding, and to know why God, among other means and methods, (alike perhaps, for all we can know, possible to him,) did choose by this to procure our redemption and salvation; I answer, (though it becomes us rather to adore the depth of his counsels, than to search or hope to sound it, yet,) some congruities of this method to the wisdom of God, and the reason of the thing, are intimated to us, and in some manner are apparent. It became God, as his goodness toward us was infinite, so that the demonstrations thereof to his glory and our good should be answerably so, which perhaps could not otherwise be, than by such a condescension; as a prince could not make any other so great attestation of his favor to his vassal, than by descending from his throne, laying aside his majesty, and putting himself in a like condition, conversing with him freely, subjecting himself to the same laws and duties, enduring the like hardships and inconveniences with him. It was expedient our Redeemer should be God, that he might be able by his power to save us; to remove such great obstacles, to subdue so potent enemies, (to command and contravene nature; to vanquish hell; to abolish death in our behalf,) that by the nearness of his relation, the dignity of his Person, and the value of his merit, he might fully appease God's wrath, and perfectly satisfy his justice for us: that his doctrine might carry with it the highest certainty and strongest efficacy; his example might challenge greatest regard and imitation; his laws might have supreme authority, and perfectly oblige: the redemption and salvation of man was an honor too high for any creature to arise to; a work too hard for any but God himself to perform: it was not fit that any creature should intercede or intermeddle in an affair of such importance and eminency. It was also requisite he should be man, that he might procure

favor toward man, by perfectly obeying God's commands, and submitting patiently to God's will, as man; that as man had deeply offended and wronged God, so man should highly please and content him; that, in St. Paul's language, 'as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,' (condemned and exposed to death; God being displeased with mankind for that man's transgression,) 'so by the obedience of one man many should be made righteous,' (absolved from guilt, and exempted from punishment; God being well-pleased with, and reconciled to mankind, in regard to that man's dutiful observance:) it was decent, that as man did approve, so man should condemn sin in the flesh; as man by wilful self-pleasing was brought to misery, so by voluntary suffering he should be restored to happiness; ἔπρεπε, 'It became him,' saith the Apostle, 'for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering:' it was also fit that he who was designed to intercede for our welfare, and propitiate for our faults, to succor and relieve us in our distresses, should be tender of our good and sensible of our needs; (should by nature and experience be disposed συμπαθεῖν, to compassionate our infirmities, and μετριοπαθεῖν, to be gently affected towards us, in respect of our ignorances and errors;) 'Whence,' saith the same divine Apostle, 'it behoved him' (ὤφειλε, he ought, according to the design appointed and undertaken by him) 'to be in all things made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest toward God, in things pertaining to God, that he might propitiate for the sins of the people: for in that he hath himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succor those that are tempted.' I might add, that, by appearing in human shape, (visible and audible, familiar and agreeable to us,) he was qualified for that great design of declaring God's will and intention toward us, in a less amazing and a more obliging way, than could otherwise have been; that thus with more advantage he could describe an exact copy of righteousness for us to follow; showing us how we should as men behave ourselves, how moderate our appetites, how govern our passions; how use and order all the powers of our soul and members of our body: neither was it possible otherwise that so

lively a pattern of transcendent charity, meekness, patience, and humility could have been exhibited.

In fine, it was most congruous that he who was intended to recapitulate and reconcile (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, and ἀποκαταλλάξαι) all things in heaven and earth; should be the great mediator and peacemaker between God and man; should repair God's honor, and dispense his grace; purchase man's peace, and procure his salvation; that he should be the most nearly related to both parties; even, if possible, (and what is to God impossible?) be himself both God and man; the Son of God, and our brother; the same in nature with God, in kind with us.

The proper use and influence of which great doctrine on our souls should be, to cause us with highest degrees of love and thankfulness to adore the infinite goodness of that God who hath been pleased himself to stoop so low, that he might raise us up from the lowest depth of meanness and wretchedness to the highest pitch of honor and happiness we are capable of. What words can express, what thought can reach, a favor so ineffable and inconceivable! Well might St. Paul call it ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην, love transcending all knowlege. Well may heaven and earth be astonished, and hell tremble at such a miracle of mercy. The sovereign Majesty of heaven, the Lord of glory, the world's maker, the only Son of God, and heir of all things, to become a poor, small, weak, and frail man; to dwell in a tabernacle of flesh; to converse with vile, silly, wretched mortals; to be subject to want, reproach, and pain! Ὦ βαθὸς! O depth of love and goodness unsearchable! If this will not, what consideration can raise us? what benefit affect or oblige us? What prodigious ingratitude will it be, to be insensible or neglectful of such kindness!

Another great use of this doctrine is, to engage us, as to universal obedience and submission to God's will, so particularly to humility and patience and charity. Did God thus submit, thus abase himself; and shall we be refractory, shall we exalt ourselves, shall we repine at any dispensation or proceeding of God? To these purposes St. Paul applies it; 'Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, emptied himself, and took on him the form of a

servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in the fashion of man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death:' and, 'Know, (or consider) the grace (or graciousness) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake (ἐπτώχευσε) he became poor, (a beggar,) being himself rich, that ye by his poverty might become rich.' It is a consideration by which he incites them to charity.

Thus and to such purpose are we to believe our Saviour's conception and nativity. Of which, secondly, it is affirmed, and we are to consider, that he was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost;' that is, by the virtue and operation of the Holy Ghost the blessed Virgin became impregnated, and did conceive him, without intervention of any man or father. Joseph was (ὡς ἐνομίζετο) in outward esteem and carriage, but God only was in truth, his father; which is so perspicuously and fully asserted in the gospels, that those who dare (on weak pretences of discourse) to contradict it, deserve not to be considered otherwise than as perverters of the Scripture, and subverters of its authority and use: nothing can be certainly known thence, if this truth be not.

The manner of this operation, as by St. Luke expressed, is by the supervention of the Holy Ghost, and the divine power's overshadowing the blessed Virgin; words of so general signification, and so little, as to their full extent, intelligible by us, that they well serve to bound our curiosity, and forbid farther inquiry. Some indeed have been so bold as to determine that the Holy Ghost did bring from heaven and instil a body into the Virgin; that our Saviour's flesh was made of a divine seed, and of the substance of God: that the Holy Ghost did in his conception create and impart somewhat of matter. It is enough to say that these are rash and groundless conceits. The Fathers more soberly (to prevent dangerous and unbecoming thoughts and speeches in this matter) say that our Saviour was conceived by the Holy Ghost, not σπερματικῶς, (seminally,) but δημιουργικῶς, (operatively,) οὐ διὰ συνουσίας, ἀλλὰ διὰ δυνάμεως; not by copulation, but by power; *Non de substantia Spiritus Sancti, sed de potentia;* Not out of the substance, but by the virtue of the Holy Ghost. Farther than so, *Generationem ejus quis enarrabit?* Who can declare the τὸ πῶς,

the perfect manner of a generation so sublime and wonderful? The reasons of his being thus conceived are more obvious; 'Conceived by the Holy Ghost.'

In my endeavor to show the reason why our Saviour was thus conceived, I was interrupted the last time; I shall therefore, resuming a little what was said, proceed.

1. It was the most fit way of effecting that so necessary conjunction of the divine and human nature. A work of such glory and grandeur, of such grace and goodness, was not to be achieved by any other agent than him who is the substantial virtue and love of God; by whom we see all extraordinary and most eminent works managed and attributed to him. In the creation of the world he moved on the waters, forming and actuating the world; by him those signal works of providence, revelation of divine truth, prediction of future events, performance of miracles, renovation of men's minds, and reformation of their manners, are in a particular manner ascribed; and so to him this most high and glorious performance was proper and due.

2. It being necessary that our Saviour should be consecrated to his great offices, and perfectly sanctified in his person; and those performances being appropriated to the Holy Ghost, (the natural spring and author of all derived sanctity,) his efficacy therefore must needs intervene, if Jeremiah, St. Paul, St. John Baptist, (persons designed to offices and employments in dignity and importance so far inferior,) were sanctified, and separated, and filled with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb; in how more excellent a kind and degree was it requisite that he should be sanctified, who was sent to redeem and purify the world from all filth and fault? It was necessary that his human nature, which God vouchsafed so highly to advance, (to assume into so near a conjunction and union with himself,) should be free from all stain and pollution, (such as adheres to our sinful flesh and corrupt nature in ordinary propagation;) that he whom God should so dearly love, and be so intirely pleased with, should be void of the least inclination to iniquity or impurity; 'for God,' as the psalmist tells us, 'is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with him:' 'He is of purer eyes

than (so much as) to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity,' much less would he receive any defiled thing into so near an union, so dear a respect and complacence with himself. It was also necessary that he who was appointed to appease God's displeasure, and reconcile him fully toward us; to redeem mankind from the guilt and power of sin; to satisfy and expiate for all our offences, with full authority to teach, command, and exemplify all righteousness; should himself know no sin; 'Such a high-priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners'—'who had no need first to offer up sacrifices for his own sins.' The sacrifice expiatory of our sins was and ought to be 'a Lamb (ἄμωμος καὶ ἄσπιλος) without blemish and without spot:' therefore was he fully sanctified, and became τὸ ἅγιον, that holy thing, as he is called by the angel; ('Therefore that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God;') therefore from the fountain of holiness, the Holy Ghost, (whose proper name doth import holiness, whose proper work it is to sanctify,) did he derive a perfect sanctity and purity in his sacred conception.

3. I might add, as observable, the analogy (or resemblance) that is between the conception of our Saviour for us, and his formation in us; his generation and our regeneration; his becoming our brother in the flesh, our becoming his brethren in the Spirit; both being performed by the same agent: as Christ was made true man, and partaker of our nature, so we become true Christians, and (θείας φύσεως κοινωνοὶ) 'partakers of the divine nature' by the operation of the same divine Spirit: as he by nature, so we by grace are born 'not by blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Hence accrues a new relation, and we become his brethren, not only as he was made like us, but as we become like him, and are begot of God by the same heavenly virtue, by the same incorruptible seed.

The proper use of this doctrine is to cause us farther still to adore the goodness and wisdom of God, so fully, so fitly carrying on that infinitely merciful and gracious work of our redemption; all the divine Persons in a particular manner conspiring, as in the design, so in the execution thereof: the Fa-

ther sending his Son; the Son condescending to come; the Holy Ghost bringing him into the world: to which blessed Trinity therefore rendering all praise and thanks, we proceed to that which is farther contained in these words; 'Born of the Virgin Mary.'

'Born of her.' Being born doth not barely denote his nativity, but includes his whole human generation, (with the parts and progress thereof;) implying all that she, as a mother, did confer thereto; and comprehending, 1. His conception of her substance; whence he is called the fruit of her womb; rod (or branch) sprouting from the stem of Jesse; and, 'Behold,' saith the angel, *συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ*, 'thou shalt conceive in thy womb.' 2. The nutrition, augmentation, and intire conformation of his body, also of her blood and substance; whence her womb is said to bear him, ('Blessed is the womb that bare thee;') that she was *ἔγκυος*, (gravidated, or) great with child of him; and *εὑρέσθη*, she was found (she was observed by apparent signs) *ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα*, to be of child with him. 3. His nativity itself; thus expressed by the Evangelist; 'The days were accomplished that she should be delivered; and she brought forth her firstborn Son.' Whatever therefore any mother doth confer to the intire production of a child is attributed plainly to the Virgin; whence she is truly and properly (and is accordingly frequently called in the Gospels) the mother of our Saviour, the mother of our Lord; and hath been (may be in some propriety of speech) styled *Θεοτόκος*, *Deipara; Dei Genetrix et Dei Mater;* the Bearer and Mother of God, (that is, of him who is God, though not of him, as God.)

But let us farther observe what the words afford to us considerable: 'Born of the Virgin Mary:' they imply our Saviour born of a woman, born of a virgin, born of Mary. Of a woman; that was necessary or requisite to be; of a virgin, that was convenient, decent, and wonderful; of Mary, that determines the person, and involves many circumstances of importance.

1. I say, 'born of a woman,' *ἐκ σοῦ*, (as it is in the best copies of St. Luke, i. 35.) and *ἐκ γυναικὸς*, (as it is in St. Paul, Gal. iv. 4.) not *in* a woman only, (*ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν*, Matt. i. 20.) or *through* a woman, but *of* a woman; that is, of the matter and substance of a woman; so as thereby to bear the

relation of a kinsman, to become consanguineous to all mankind, (whom God did make of one blood.) We may easily conceive that God could have immediately created (as he did our first parents) a nature in kind and properties like to ours, and assumed it; but that would not have so fitly served his design of reconciling himself to us and redeeming us; to the effecting that, not only a resemblance in nature, but a cognation and proximity of blood was requisite, or at least more convenient and suitable. Our blood being tainted, our whole stock degraded by the disloyalty and rebellion of our common ancestors, it was fit it should be purged and restored by the satisfactory merit and fidelity of one who was of our race and kindred. We being to be adopted and received into God's family, it was fit it should be by intervention of a common relation: such is St. Paul's discourse; 'God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those that were under the law; that by performing the obedience due to the law, he might redeem those, who being obliged to obey the law, did yet transgress it,' (*ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν*; that we might be constituted sons; receive the state and quality of sons to God.) It was congruous that the devil, who by the weakness of a woman had seduced man from his duty to God, (had overthrown and triumphed over God's creature,) should, in just revenge, and for reparation of God's honor, by the strength and constancy of one proceeding from a woman, be himself defeated and debased, according to the prophetical promise, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head:' of the woman; the man is not mentioned; for (that which is next to be considered) he was 'born of the Virgin Mary.' So it was of old presignified and prophesied; 'A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son:' a Virgin; *alma*, (so Aquila renders it,) *ἀπόκρυφος*, a recluse; that perhaps seldom had seen, had never however known a man.

2. 'Born of a Virgin.' So it was, and so it was fit it should be. It was decent that the tabernacle in which God himself would dwell should be wholly proper and inclosed; that the temple of the divinity should be holy and separate; that the soil whence holiness itself would germinate should be clear and free from all sordid mixtures; that none should touch the

border of that mountain where God would manifest himself, nor the lust of man approach that place whence the glory of God should so illustriously shine forth. It was also more than convenient, to excite admiration, to beget faith, to procure reverence in us, that our Saviour should be born in a manner so peculiar and miraculous; it could not otherwise appear plainly that he was the Son of God. Who that hears of such a passage can forbear to wonder and consider? Who can doubt him to be the Son of God, whom by sufficient and certain attestation he learns to have been conceived without any concurrence of man? Who can do otherwise than adore him, that was born in a manner so glorious and supernatural? This, it seems, was that new thing (so strange and admirable) which in the Prophet Jeremiah God did foreshow he would create in the earth, (than when he would restore Zion, and make a new covenant with Israel,) 'a woman shall compass a man;' that is, a woman (in a manner extraordinary, without man's concourse) shall conceive and contain a man; a man, who shall accomplish those great things there prophesied of and promised.

But farther; born of Mary; of that particular person determined and described in the gospel; her that was espoused to and lived with Joseph; (Joseph the carpenter, that was born in the town of Bethlehem; lived in Nazareth; was descended in a direct lineage from King David, according to both a natural and legal descent, and consequently from Abraham; she being also of the same stock and family, as may be collected from some circumstances intimated in the story, but more certainly deduced from the prophecies concerning our Saviour's stock, and the assertions implying their accomplishment;) Mary, I say, a princess by blood and progeny; and extracted from the most illustrious stem on earth, not only famous among men, but (which is infinitely more) most dear to God; yet she such as was very mean and poor in condition; humble and meek in spirit; religious and devout toward God: such the passages occurring in the gospel concerning her do show her; such that most excellent hymn of hers in St. Luke (dictated by a spirit ravished with the most sprightly devotion imaginable; devotion full of ardent love, passionate thankfulness, hearty joy tempered with submiss reverence) do demonstrate her to

have been. Of a mother so related and so qualified was our Saviour born. So related; that was necessary, for the declaration of God's truth and fidelity, performing those ancient predictions and promises made to the fathers; to Abraham, ('that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed;') to David, to whom God had sworn, as St. Peter tells us, that of 'the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ, to set on his throne;' who (as appears by many passages in the gospels) God's people did expect and believe that he should be the 'rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch growing out of his roots;' in whom the horn of David should bud; who should 'raise the tabernacle of David that was fallen;' and 'rule over the kingdom of Jacob for ever.' So was the blessed Virgin related, and to such purpose, (that all God's predictions and promises concerning the circumstances of our Saviour's birth might be verified,) and so qualified; such in outward condition; holy in disposition of mind; homely in state of life; to teach us that God doth not so much regard the outward pomps and appearances of this world, as the inward frame and temper of spirit: it is some disparagement to those vain glories, by men so greatly admired; and it may induce us but moderately to esteem them, to consider that God did not choose for the mother of his Son and Saviour of mankind any great princess, any honorable or wealthy personage; but her that was espoused to a mean artisan, rich only in grace, splendid in spiritual endowments; 'adorned with that hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' Such an one the Son of God chose to bear himself, to bear duty unto; to confer that great favor, that high honor on; (an honor, among exterior ones, the highest that ever was vouchsafed to any person, to any mere creature: for spiritual blessings our Saviour himself doth prefer even above this great privilege; 'Whosoever,' saith he, 'shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother:' the same is so according to a more excellent kind of relation.) By the way we may observe, that although the blessed Virgin was in that respect κεχαριτωμένη, 'especially favored and blessed among women;' though all nations must needs therefore

esteem and call her blessed, though she justly acknowleged that God had done μεγαλεῖα, (mighty and magnificent things for her,) yet in reality to have Christ born in our souls, to partake of his divine grace and presence in our hearts, is a higher honor, a truer happiness than that: for when the good woman, ravished by our Saviour's discourse, did cry out, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee:' 'Yea rather,' said he, 'blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.'

We must not also neglect to observe that our Saviour chose so mean a parentage, partly that he might taste and undergo the hardships and inconveniences incident to our nature, (thereby more fully meriting and satisfying for us;) partly to give us example of the most difficult virtues and duties, (of humility, meekness, and patience,) showing us how we should cheerfully endure wants, pains, disgraces; contentedly want all the pleasure, wealth, and splendor of the world.

The use of this point concerning our Saviour's birth of the blessed Virgin is not to beget in us fond opinions, or to ground scandalous practices in respect to her; attributing to her (I cannot say less than sacrilegiously and profanely) such swelling, vain, false titles and elogies, *Regina Cœli*, *Salus Mundi*, *Mater Misericordiarum*, *Domina nostra*, *Sponsa Dei*, and the like; ascribing to her the most sublime attributes and actions of God, providence and protection over us, yea redemption itself; performing acts of religious veneration, (and those in a very high manner and strain,) and all this without any good reason, any plausible authority, or considerable example; I say, from such groundless conceits and dangerous practices we should beware; which, as they derogate from God's honor and prejudice his service, so they do rather injure, abuse, and discredit the blessed Virgin, than do any right or honor to her; whose greater honor indeed it was to be a meek and humble servant, than to be the mother of her Saviour and Lord; the greatest and truest honor we can do her is to imitate her grace, and to obey him who vouchsafed to be her son. But I will not prosecute that matter, nor farther insist on this point: some practical uses thereof I have in the precedent discourse insinuated; the rest I leave to your meditation.

Next our Saviour's incarnation, (his conception and nativity,)

with the causes and manner thereof, (partly expressed, partly implied,) doth succeed his passion. It might be inquired why something concerning his life interceding is not mentioned, since we see the Apostles, in their preachings declaratory concerning the principal matters of our faith, take especial notice of those things; 'Ye know,' saith St. Peter, in his catechetical discourse to Cornelius and his friends, 'the thing that was done throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; Jesus of Nazareth; how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' And the same Apostle in his speech to the Jews; 'Ye men of Israel,' saith he, 'hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye also know: him, being delivered,' &c. Why therefore is not some such mention made here concerning the manner of our Saviour's life, the quality of his works and actions? I answer; that it did suffice to describe our Saviour (as the object of the faith we profess) by such characters as did most notoriously determine and distinguish his person; and withal did involve and intimate the most signal mysteries of our faith, the most important doctrines of our religion, the main design of his undertaking, the fit method in which he prosecuted it, and the most effectual means by which he accomplished it: the belief of which doth virtually contain (or consequentially infer) our belief of whatever beside it is necessary or expedient for us to believe concerning him. There was nothing about our Saviour's person more conspicuous and visible than his trial, condemnation, and execution, in the time, under the presidency, of Pontius Pilate; nor was any passage of his life, any performance of his more conducible to the accomplishment of that design, which God was pleased he should undertake: it was therefore sufficient and fit to describe him by this and other such passages, (well attested, important, and influential:) and if we believe in him who so suffered, we consequently believe all that he did or said; all that is in the Gospels (the most certain and authentical testimonies) delivered concerning him; and that he truly was whatever we

see there he did pretend and teach himself to be; (the true Messias, the only Son of God, and Saviour of the world.) By this passage therefore (assuming his resurrection) the Apostles do characterise him: for instance; 'Be it known to you all,' saith St. Peter, 'that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you have crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, in that doth this man stand before you whole:' 'Neither to us only is the Lamb slain:' a periphrasis fully and clearly denoting his person; but the Jews themselves (though out of hatred and in contempt) call him ordinarily *Talui*, (*Suspensus*, him that was hanged,) and ὁ ἀνασκολοπισθεὶς, (you know,) in the Pagan scoffer's language, doth signify him. But as to the thing itself.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead—

THIS part of our Saviour's humiliation is in the ancient creeds expressed more concisely by one word, *crucifixus: crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato, et sepultus;* crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; so it goes in the text of Ruffinus, and agreeably in other ancient expositors. But this alteration, (or accession,) it seems, was made (as for the express disclaiming of some heretical conceits that afterward sprung up, denying the real truth of our Saviour's death, so) for the more full and clear representation of the thing, by implying the manner, and main circumstances, and complete effect thereof; for by suffering (I conceive) was intended to express, that what he underwent was in way of judicial process and sentence of law, obtaining force and effect on him, (that he was prosecuted, adjudged, and punished as a malefactor: for the word πάσχειν, applied as in this case, did, I suppose, (as to suffer doth now in common use with us,) by an εὐφημισμὸς, (a mild and modest kind of speech,) bear this emphasis, importing to be punished with death in a legal course:) then being crucified doth show the kind and manner of that suffering, which was most painful and disgraceful; and being dead, was added to declare the full effect and extreme complement of all; (he so suffered, was so crucified, as thereby to lose his life.) Let us somewhat ponder on these particulars distinctly, then consider all together.

'Suffered under Pontius Pilate.' 'Suffered:' that is, (I say, in my apprehension,) underwent judgment and punishment as a malefactor. I deny not but the word may in signification extend to all the infirmities, inconveniences, pains, and sorrows that our Saviour did undergo, both in the course of his ministerial performances, and chiefly before his death; but I think those sufferings of his rather considerable on other accounts (as consequents on our nature assumed, adjuncts to his condition, and concomitants of his passion) than here directly intended; for to interpret ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, in Pontius Pilate's time, so as to respect any time before our Saviour's being accused and arraigned before him, seems a stretch and a strain. 'Suffered,' here, I therefore take for 'punished,' in way of seeming justice, as a malefactor. That he should thus suffer, God had determined; and it was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, 'that he should be numbered among the transgressors:' and St. Paul tells us, 'that God made him sin for us,' (that is, ordered that he should be dealt with as a sinful or criminous person,) 'who knew no sin,' (was perfectly innocent, and free from the least tendency to any fault:) and we see in the history that he was impeached of high crimes; as a blasphemer against God, (assuming to himself the title, power, and properties and prerogatives of God;) as a seditious and rebellious person, (perverting, or stirring up, the nation, and hindering to give tribute to Cæsar, and pretending that he was Christ, a King;) as a deluder and seducer of the people; in general, as a κακοποιὸς, a criminal person and malefactor: and that he was condemned, (though by a sentence extorted against the conscience of the judge, by malicious importunity of the accusers,) and suffered in pretence as such, is clear, and confessed on all hands. And that we may the better admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this dispensation, let us meditate on the reasons why it was so ordered. To which purpose we may consider,

1. That as our Saviour did choose to live a life of greatest meanness and hardship, so for the same reasons he would die a death of all most bitter and uncomfortable: such is to our nature the death of a malefactor: there is nothing to man's nature (and especially to honest, ingenuous, and well-disposed nature, wherein natural modesty is not extinguished or decayed)

more abominable. God hath put into us, for good purposes, a lively sense of all disgrace; and of all disgraces, that which proceeds from imputation of odious crimes is most disgustful and pungent; and being conscious of innocence doth increase the smart; and to perceive ourselves to die under it (to leave this world with such an irreparable stain on our reputation and memory) is still more grievous: to languish by degrees, and endure the torments of a long and sharp disease, all ingenuous persons would much rather choose, than in this manner, being esteemed and dealt with as a villain, to find a present and easy dispatch: we see somewhat of this resentment breaking forth in our Saviour, and how man's nature discovered itself in that question, 'Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?' Yes; he loathed to be so treated, yet chose it as he did other the worst inconveniences incident to our nature and to that low condition which he put himself into; to endure want and fare hardly; to be contemned, envied, hated, scorned, and reproached in all the course of his life: he had not been so complete and extreme a sufferer, if he had died any other way. He was oftentimes in danger of death, both from the secret machinations and open violences of those which envied and hated him; but he industriously declined a death so easy, so honorable, (if I may so say: for it is not so great a disgrace to perish by private malice, or by sudden rage, as by the solemn and deliberate proceeding of men in public place, credit, and authority:) he showed his disciples, say the gospels, that it was incumbent on him (ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν) to suffer many things, to be rejected, or reprobated, (ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι, ἐξουδενοῦσθαι, to be vilified and made nothing of,) by the chief priests, and elders, and scribes; to be condemned to death, and delivered to the Gentiles, εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified. Thus would our Saviour suffer, not only in his body, by bruises and wounds; in his soul, by most bitter sorrows; but in his name and reputation, by the worst of ignominies; undergoing, as well all the infamy, as the infirmity that did belong to or could befall us: thus by all means showing his charity, and exercising his compassion, and advancing his merit for us.

2. Again; death by public judgment, as a malefactor, did

agree to the nature of his undertaking, was congruous to his designs in dying; did aptly represent what he was doing, and signify why he did it. We were guilty; we deserved condemnation; extreme pain and shame were due to us for our sins: he undertook to satisfy for us, and therefore underwent the like judgment and punishment; was reputed, was called, was dealt with as a malefactor in our stead. What we had really done; dishonored and usurped on God; disordered and troubled the world; deceived and seduced ourselves and others, (by our negligent mistakes and our wilful miscarriages, our evil practices and examples,) that was imputed to him; 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:' he not only bore an equivalent punishment, but in a manner an equal blame with us.

3. Add hereto, that since it was determined he should die for us, and that not in a natural but a violent manner, and that to satisfy divine justice; it was fit he should do it in that way wherein God's right is most nearly concerned, and his providence most discernible: wherein it might most plainly appear that God did exact and take, Christ did yield unto and undergo punishment: 'All judgment is God's,' (as Moses tells us,) performed by authority derived from him; all magistrates are his officers; by them he orders and governs the world: what therefore is done in a way of formal judgment by persons of authority, God himself may be said in an especial manner to do, (as being done by his commission, in his stead, in his behalf.) It was therefore an act of submission to God's justice, becoming the person he sustained, (of our Surety and our Saviour,) to undergo such a judgment and such a punishment. Seasonably therefore did our Saviour answer Pilate, vouching his authority, 'Thou hadst no power at all over (or against) me, except it were given thee from above:' it was in regard to that supreme and original authority of God, that our Saviour subjected himself to these inferior and subordinate powers, as the proper instruments of God's justice. Had he suffered in any other way, (by any private malice or passion of men,) God's providence had been less visible, Christ's obedience not so remarkable; and if he must die by public hands,

it must be as a criminal, on pretence of guilt; there must be testimonies produced, however false; there must be a sentence pronounced, though partial and unjust: no man is prosecuted or persecuted by authority, without some color of desert.

4. Farther, in no other way perhaps could our Saviour display (with such advantage) all manner of virtue and goodness, to the honor of God, and our benefit; whether we consider the occasions to exercise his virtue, or the means of showing it. The judgment hall, with all the streets that lead him thither, and thence to execution, attended by guards of soldiers, and accompanied by clamors of the people, were so many theatres, whereon he had opportunity (convenience and leisure) publicly to act the parts of the highest and hardest virtues; to declare his courage and constancy in defence of truth and maintenance of a good conscience; his meekness and patience in bearing the greatest affronts and reproaches, injuries and calumnies the worst imaginable; his intire resignation to God's will; his submission and obedience to man's law and authority; his admirable charity in pitying, in excusing, in praying for, yea in suffering all this for the good of those, who in a manner so despiteful, injurious, and cruel, did persecute him: all these graces and virtues, by the matter being thus ordered, were, in a degree most high, in a manner most conspicuous, demonstrated to the praise of God's name, and the advancement of his truth; for the confirmation of our faith; an instruction, encouragement, and inducement of good practice to us.

Neither must we omit to consider the farther emphasis that lies in the word suffer, which implies our Saviour not only to have been dealt with as a malefactor, but to have really endured what a man in that case might or should do: that he was sensible and affected (according to the frame of human nature) with the pain, disgrace, and shame, and all evils whatever did appear to attend his passion: as his complexion was most pure and delicate, his spirit most vivid and apprehensive, accordingly were the pains that he felt, both in body and soul, most sharp and afflictive. Some men may fondly pretend to, or falsely glory in, a stupid apathy, or a stubborn contempt of all those evils to which our nature is subject; our Saviour did not so, but with a quiet submission and sweet composedness of

mind resented them; as God intended we should do when he implanted sense and passion in our natural constitution, and ordered objects to affect and afflict them, for our use and advantage.

Thus, and for such reasons and to such purposes, (as I conceive,) did our Saviour suffer, or undergo judgment and punishment: it is added, 'under Pontius Pilate,' ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου; where the preposition ἐπὶ may either denote the circumstance of time, when our Saviour's passion did happen, (in the time of Pontius Pilate's government or presidency over Judea; so ἐπὶ is frequently used,) or it may farther imply a respect to that person, as an instrument of our Saviour's passion, (by or under Pontius Pilate, as president and judge; so the word is sometimes used.) Neither of these senses, I suppose, were distinctly, but both conjunctly intended here, in relation to the gospel-history: the which here (as to the main passages) we are supposed to know, and profess to believe: neither do I think any more of mystery designed, beyond the full and clear determination of our Saviour's person, the declaration of whom we believe in, by circumstances most apt and suitable to that purpose; the time when, the person under whom, and consequently the place where, and somewhat of the manner how he suffered. However, all these circumstances are in themselves considerable, and afford some matter of edification to our faith and practice. The time (in itself most fit, and agreeable to divine predictions) doth illustrate the wisdom of God in his providence, and confirm his veracity, constancy, and fidelity: when the fulness of time was come, he grieved at present evils, even to a degree of excessive anguish, trouble, and agony, (περίλυποι, ἀδημονεῖν γενόμενοι ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ, ἡ ψυχή μου τετάρακται, are words used to express his sorrowful resentment;) he feared future evils, to a degree of horror and an amazement, (to an ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι; that is, to be affrighted and astonished:) such height of passion did the sense of present pangs, the foresight of impending evils, the apprehension of his own, the consideration of our state, raise him to; such a burden, all the sins of mankind to lie on his shoulders, no wonder if he groaned under it: God's displeasure flaming out against sin, no wonder it did terrify him: such a Father (whom

he so dearly loved) frowning on, and hiding his face from him, it might well trouble him: such a pity, such a love, contemplating man's sinfulness, feeling his misery, it is not strange that it should affect him. But I must pass over this most large and fruiful subject of meditation. When the world was in the most general peace and deepest calm, and consequently men's attention more ready, and their minds more capable of instruction; when the greatest (or the most considerable) part of the world was united under one empire, and so more fit to be incorporated into a spiritual commonwealth, (to communicate in offices of piety, to impart and receive instruction;) when mankind generally was better civilised, inquisitive after knowlege, and receptive of truth; when the sceptre of legislation and supreme authority was just departed from Judah; while the Jewish temple yet stood, but not long before its destruction; when the seventy hebdomades (of years) were near expiring, (the time when the Messias should be cut off;) in short, when all things were duly prepared and suited for the great effects designed by God to proceed from our Saviour's passion and other performances, then did he suffer and do what God had in his wisdom and goodness predetermined, presignified, and predicted.

I might add, the time was fit to be set down, as a character apt to confirm the truth of the history; for direction to a fair inquiry and trial concerning it; to exclude all confusion and uncertainty about it. As for the person whom; if we consider him as a Roman stranger, as a governor and judge, according to his personal qualities, or according to his deportment in this affair, something in all these respects may offer itself observable. He was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; so Jews and Gentiles conspired in violence and injury against their common Saviour; that so (in type and mystery) 'every mouth might be stopped, and all the world might become guilty before God.' Neither was it for nothing decreed by God, that the Jews should deliver our Saviour up to the Gentiles, (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,) 'to mock, and scourge, and crucify him.' The Jews out of envy and malice delivered up, accused, prosecuted, instigated, and importuned against him; the Gentiles out of ignorance, profaneness, and unjust partiality, condemned and

executed him: whereby the ingratitude, iniquity, and impiety of all mankind in some sort did appear, and was aptly represented; and in consequence thereof his infinite goodness is demonstrated, who for so impious, unjust, flagitious a generation, for such malicious enemies and cruel persecutors, did willingly suffer: he suffered for them by whom he suffered. I might add, that a stranger was more likely to be a fair and indifferent judge, and to do what was designed and fit to be done in our Saviour's trial. Consider Pilate as a governor and judge, for so he was; Cæsar's procurator, and president of Judea, (ἐπίτροπος and ἡγεμὼν;) and therein we may discern the wisdom and special providence of God punishing our Saviour for us by his own officer in a course of justice; the loyal obedience of our Saviour submitting both to God and man, (though in a case of plain outrage and highest injustice against himself;) the heinousness of that wicked proceeding, wherein that sacred power committed to him by God, and the venerable name of justice, were so abused. So that if ever, then one might have said with the wise man, 'I saw the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.' As for this Pilate's personal qualities, he is reported by the historians near those times to have been a man of a harsh and rough temper; wilful and haughty in spirit; rapacious, violent, and cruel in his proceedings; and was therefore a proper instrument of providence for the execution of such a business, so holy and gracious in God's purpose, so villainous and barbarous according to man's intention: such an one deserved to bear the guilt of a fact so base and execrable, was worthy to be employed, might be ready to undertake therein: it had not been so plausible in itself, that such an act should, nor so credible that it could, proceed from any person of good disposition or right intention. But of him it could not be improbable, who, by his former violences, (such as on their complaints did soon after remove him from his charge,) had so incensed the Jews, that he should not stick to gratify them in a matter that they so earnestly concerned themselves in, and which in semblance (setting apart considerations of justice and honesty, so little material in such a person's regard) so little touched his own interest; in yielding up so poor

and inconsiderable (in outward show) a person, however in his own conscience most innocent, as a boon or sacrifice to their importunate rage. Such he was; and yet it is observable that he behaved himself, in comparison of the furious Jews, with some moderation and ingenuity. He was so fair in examination of the case, as, notwithstanding their eager and clamorous prosecution, to discern the right, and declare our Saviour guiltless: he was so far constant and true to his conscience, as to expostulate with the Jews, and once, twice, a third time, to challenge them, 'Why, what evil hath he done?' As often did he discover his inclination and readiness (yea, his will and intention) to free the innocent person; yet had he not the heart or the honesty thoroughly to resist their importunity; they were more obstinate in their wicked, than he resolute in his good purpose: so out of fear to offend them, and favor to oblige them, (those usual corrupters of right judgment,) he yielded to them; suffering himself basely to be overborne by their wicked solicitations, sacrificing acknowleged innocence to his own private interest and their implacable malice. Thus did this heathen judge behave himself, serving divine Providence, not only in the public and formal condemnation of our Saviour to the punishment due to us, but in the solemn and serious absolution of him from all blame in himself; in outward show he condemned our Saviour; in truth he condemned himself (his corrupt judge) and the Jews (his malicious accusers:) though he took away his life, yet he cleared his reputation, and afforded a testimony most valid and convincing of his innocence; such as was requisite to confute all the Jewish calumnies and aspersions, and to confirm our faith.

Farthermore; the name of Pontius Pilate intimates the place of our Saviour's passion, he being well known to have been governor of Judea, and to have his tribunal of justice at the mother city thereof, Jerusalem; at Jerusalem, that 'bloody city,' as the prophet calls it, whose character it was to be 'the killer of the prophets, and stoner of them that were sent unto her; out of which it was (in a manner) impossible that a prophet should perish:' yet the place of all the world most favored and graced by God by special benefits and privileges; 'his own proper seat' (the city of God, the city of the great

King, so it is styled,) 'which he had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel (out of all the people on earth) to put his name (to place his especial presence) there:' the holy, the beloved city: there, at his own doors, as it were, before his own sacred palace, where most especial respect and veneration were due to him, was the King of heaven adjudged and executed; by procurement of his own servants, peculiarly related to him, the chief priests and elders of his chosen people, persons wholly devoted to his service, and highly dignified by him, (whose office and especial duty it was to maintain truth and encourage righteousness, to procure honor to God and obedience to his commandments:) which as it greatly advances the goodness of him who willingly suffered there, and by such, so it much aggravates man's ingratitude and iniquity.

It follows, 'crucified;' whereby is expressed the manner and kind of our Saviour's passion; which was by being affixed to a cross, (that is, to a kind of gibbet or *patibulum*,) mainly consisting of two beams, (or pieces of wood;) one erect, to which the length of his body was applied and fastened by nails; the other transverse, to which (his arms being stretched out) his hands were nailed: which kind of suffering we may briefly consider as most bitter and painful; as most ignominious and shameful; as agreeable and advantageous to the designs of our Saviour's suffering; as significant and emblematical; as completory of divine perdictions and presignifications; in fine, as instructive, admonitory of duty, and excitative of devotion to us.

1. We may easily imagine what acerbity of pain must be endured in his limbs being stretched forth, racked, and tentered; and, continuing in that posture, in the piercing his hands and his feet (parts most exquisitely tender and sensible) with sharp, hard iron nails; so that (as it is said of Joseph) the iron entered into his soul, or his soul entered into iron, in abiding exposed to the injuries of sun scorching, wind beating on, weather searching his grievous sores and wounds: such a pain it was; and that no stupifying, no transient pain, but very acute, and withal lingering: we see, in the story, he and those that suffered with him had both presence of mind and time to discourse; three long hours and more he continued under such

torment, sustaining every minute beyond the pangs of an ordinary death. So that well may that in the Lamentations be applied to his suffering state; 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.' Such a kind of suffering did our Saviour choose to undergo, declaring the excess of his love, (in being ready to endure the saddest afflictions and smarts for us;) signifying the heinousness of our sins, (deserving so extreme punishment;) exemplifying the hardest duties of obedience and patience to us.

2. And as most sharp and afflictive in pain, so most vile and shameful was this kind of suffering. It was *servile supplicium*, (*quod etiam homine libero, quamvis nocente videatur indignum*,) a punishment never by the Romans (under whom our Saviour suffered) legally inflicted on freemen, but only on slaves, (such as were scarce regarded as men, or in life, having forfeited, as it were, made away, or quite lost themselves;) and among the Jews, that punishment which approached nearest, and in part agreed therewith, (for they had no such cruel or inhuman kind of punishment appointed by their law,) hanging up the dead bodies of such as had been executed, was accounted most infamous and abominable; 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' on a *patibulum*, says the Law: cursed; that is, addicted to reproach and malediction: cursed of God, (the Hebrew hath it;) that is, doth seem to be deserted and rejected and afflicted of God. In the very nature of the thing, to be raised on high, and for a good continuance of time offered to the view of all that pass by, doth beget ill suspicion and provoke censure; invites obloquy, scorn, and contempt; draws forth language of derision, despite, and detestation, especially from the rude and hard-hearted multitude, who think and speak according to event and appearance; who *sequitur fortunam semper et odit damnatos*:) so we see that the people did mock, and jeer, and revile, (ἐξεμυκτήριζον, ἐνέπαιζον, ἐβλασφήμουν,) drawing up their noses, shooting out their lips, and shaking their heads, and letting loose their tongues against him, in this condition; (the same men perhaps who had formerly admired his glorious works, and had been affected with his excellent discourses; who had followed, and favored, and blessed, and

glorified him.) 'They look and stare on me,' is a part of the description of his suffering; (answering to that in St. Luke, εἱστήκει ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν; the people stood gazing on him;) and θεατρίζεσθαι, to be made a gazing-stock, (or object of reproach,) we see, is reckoned by the Apostle as an aggravation of affliction. Hence became it such a scandal, &c.

Thus did our Saviour endure the cross, despising the shame; (despising; that is, not simply esteeming it as no evil, but not esteeming it so great an evil, as for the avoiding it to neglect the accomplishment of his great and glorious designs.) There is in man's nature an aversation or abhorrency of disgrace, perhaps more strong than that of pain: mockings and scourgings we find joined together; nor doth pain more grievously affect the animal sense, than being insulted over and despised goes against the grain of men's fancy and natural constitution of soul; and generally men will more contentedly endure one than the other. We need not therefore doubt but our Saviour was sensible of this natural evil, and that such indignity did add some degree of bitterness and loathsomeness to his cup of affliction; yet, in consideration of the glory that would accrue to God, the benefit to us, the reward to himself, he willingly underwent it; 'He became a curse for us,' (was exposed to all malediction and reviling from sinful men;) 'despised and rejected, and disesteemed of men,' in the prophet's language; did also seem deserted and rejected by God himself, (himself in a manner concurring in such an opinion, as by his woful outcry, *Lama sabachthani*, doth appear.) ['We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.'] So did he become a curse for us, that we might be redeemed from the curse of the Law; (that is, from that exemplary punishment due to our transgression of the Law, with the disgrace before men, and the displeasure of God attending it;) he was contented to be dealt with as a slave, (as a wretched miscreant,) 'making himself of no reputation,' that we might be free, not only from the pain, but from the ignominy we deserved, and with our lives recover both our honor and liberty, which we had forfeited and lost.

3. Farther; this kind of suffering had some advantages, and did conduce toward our Saviour's design in being notorious, and

in continuing a competent time. If he had been privately made away, or suddenly dispatched, no such great notice had been taken of it, nor could the matter of fact itself have been so fully proved, (for the confirmation of faith and conviction of infidelity,) nor had that excellent deportment of his under such affliction (his most divine patience, meekness, and charity) so illustriously shone forth. God's providence therefore did order it so, (to prevent all exceptions and excuses of unbelief,) that as the course of his life, so the manner of his death should be most open and conspicuous; 'These things,' as St. Paul told King Agrippa, 'were not done in a corner;' (nor presently hushed up; but were done leisurely, in the face of the world:) 'I spoke freely,' saith our Saviour, 'to the world; I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews from all places resort; and in secret have I done nothing.' His proceedings were not close or clanculary, but frank and open; and as he lived, so he died, publicly and visibly, the world being witness of his death, and so prepared to believe his resurrection, and to embrace his doctrine; according to what himself foretold; 'I, being lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto me;' (all men to take notice, by the remarkableness of it; some to believe on me; by the wondrous consequences of it;) and, 'As Moses did exalt the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be exalted;' (that as by beholding the serpent elevated on a pole men were cured of those mortiferous stings they had received; so by believing on him crucified men should be saved from those destructive and deadly sins they had committed.)

4. This kind of suffering also seems in many respects significant, and full of instructive emblems. His posture represented that large and comprehensive charity which he bare in his heart toward us, stretching forth his arms of kindness, pity, and mercy; with them, as it were, to embrace the whole world, and receive all mankind under the wings of his gracious protection: it showed him earnestly, as it were, wooing and entreating us to return to God, and embrace the reconciliation he had purchased and did offer; 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people:' God did so of old by his prophets mediately and figuratively; he did so in our Saviour

immediately and properly by himself. The cross was, as it were, a pulpit, from which our Saviour did exhort to repentance, and preach divine grace, and offer remission of sins unto us, with action most affecting and pathetical.

His being lifted up may signify and mind us, that submission to God's will, suffering for truth and righteousness, (humility and patience,) are conjoined with and do procure exaltation; that the lower we are in humility, the higher we rise in favor, and the nearer approach to heaven; 'Whoso humbleth himself,' saith our Saviour, 'shall be exalted;' and, 'Be you humbled before the Lord, (under the mighty hand of God,) and he shall exalt you,' say with one voice St. James and St. Peter. And because 'our Saviour was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore did God ὑπερυψοῦν, superexalt him above all dignity and power in heaven and earth,' as St. Paul teaches us. The cross was a throne, where humility sat in high majesty, whence patience sat encircled with rays of glory. The same consideration may also mind us how and whence our salvation comes; that our help comes from above, and by looking upward; that as in beholding our Saviour on the cross we must lift up our eyes, so in believing on him we must raise up our hearts to heaven. In that sublimity also did our Saviour show himself standing erect, not only as a constant sufferer, but as a glorious conqueror; having, as St. Paul tells us, 'spoiled principalities and powers,' (all the principal powers of darkness, hell, sin, and death,) ἐδειγμάτισεν, 'he made a solemn show, triumphing over them on his cross.' No conqueror loftily seated in his triumphant chariot did ever yield so illustrious a spectacle; no tree was ever clothed and adorned with so glorious trophies. To the outward eye and carnal sense our Saviour was exposed to shame and scorn; but to spiritual discerning, all his and our enemies hung there, objects of contempt, undone, and overthrown. The devil, ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, (that strong and sturdy one,) hung there, bound and fettered, spoiled and disarmed, quite baffled and confounded: death itself there hung gasping, with its sting plucked out, and all its terrors quelled. The world with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly admired excellences, did there hang, all defaced and disparaged; 'the world is thereby crucified to us, and we unto the world;' so that we

cannot glory or truly rejoice in any worldly thing: (for to be splendid in external state can never henceforth be worthily deemed admirable; to be mean and low can never speak a man miserable, since the Lord of glory and fountain of happiness did himself condescend to so low a condition, and became so deep a sufferer: nor can pleasure pretend to make men happy, nor sorrow justly discourage us, since the Son of God by such a step of extreme grief hath ascended into his throne of glory.) Our sins (those sins which our Saviour did in his body *ἀναφέρειν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον*, carry up on the gibbet) hung there, exposed as trophies of his victories, objects of our hatred and horror, by him condemned in the flesh: those manifold enmities (between God and us, between man and himself, between one man and another) did all there hang together, abolished in his flesh, and slain on his cross; 'by the blood of which he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth;' together with all those yokes of bondage, those ensigns and instruments of vexation to us; those laws that burdened men so much, which set them at such distance and variance, that subjected them to guilt and condemnation unavoidable; that hand-writing of ordinances, inducing our obligation to so grievous forfeitures and penalties, was there nailed to the cross; our bonds thereby cancelled, our debts expunged.

Our Saviour's crucifixion furthermore did signify how our flesh should be dealt with, how we should mortify the lusts and affections thereof. We must not only imitate and follow our Saviour in his life, but in some sort endeavor to resemble him in his death, *συμμορφοῦσθαι τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ*, as St. Paul speaks, 'conformable to his death;' 'become *σύμφυτοι*, planted together with him in the likeness of his death:' *συσταυροῦσθαι τῷ Χριστῷ*, 'be crucified together with Christ;' 'having our old man crucified together with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, so that we no farther serve sin; mortifying our earthly members, and putting to death the deeds of the body:' 'For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.' His death may fitly represent our death to sin; his cross, the thwarting our vicious desires and inclinations; his grievous pain the bitterness of our repentance, (wherein our soul should be pierced with sharp compunction, as his sacred

flesh was torn with nails;) his disgrace, our shame and confusion, with regard to our offences. In his person, farther, we may contemplate the state of virtue and goodness in this world, exposed to envy and hatred, to censure and obloquy, to contempt and scorn, to all kind of affliction and hardship. Every good man must hang on some cross or other; *εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα*, it is our lot and portion assigned us by divine decree; to a conformity with this image and pattern of the Son of God we are predestinated; *δεῖ ἡμᾶς*, 'We must' (it is both of necessity and duty incumbent on us) 'by many tribulations enter into God's kingdom;' 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall (certainly in one way or other) suffer persecution,' (and partake of the cross.) Many such analogies and resemblances, not unprofitable, might a devout meditation (in imitation of the sacred writers) draw out, for exciting good affections and quickening to duty. But farther,

5. We may also (for the fuller confirmation of our faith, and begetting in us a due adoration of the divine wisdom and providence) observe the correspondency of this our Saviour's manner of suffering to the ancient prophecies foretelling, and the typical representations foreshowing it. That most full and clear and famous prophecy concerning our Saviour's passion (Isa. liii.) doth express him suffering as a malefactor, or with malefactors. He was to be reckoned among transgressors, suffering in a manner very painful and very despicable, ('He was to be wounded for our transgressions, and to be bruised for our iniquities;' he was to be 'despised and rejected of men, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;') which circumstances could not so punctually agree to any other kind of suffering (or punishment) in use as to this. In the 22d Psalm, the royal prophet describes an afflicted and forlorn condition, (such as by no passages of his history, in the full extent and according to the literal signification of his words, doth appear suitable to his own person, and therefore more properly is to be applied to the Messias, whom he did represent;) and in that description, among other passages suiting to our Saviour, these words occur; 'Thou hast brought me into the dust of death: for dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced (or digged, *ὤρυξαν*) my hands and

my feet:' (which words do most patly and livelily set out our Saviour's being nailed to the cross.) And in the Prophet Zechariah God foretells, speaking in his own name, They, (that is, the Jews, sensible of what they had done, and penitently affected,) 'they shall look on me, whom they have pierced:' which place needs no violence to extort the right meaning from it; no comment to explain or adapt it to the crucifixion of God, our Saviour, to which it is so literally congruous. The same was also fitly prefigured by apposite types: Isaac, the immediate son and heir of the promise, (in whom the faithful seed was called, or conveyed down by him,) and so a most apt type of our Saviour, he being devoted and offered to God in sacrifice, did himself bear the wood, by which he was to be offered: so did our Saviour (the promised seed in which all nations should be blessed) himself bear the cross, by which he was to suffer, and to be offered up a sacrifice to God. Those which were bitten (dangerously) by fiery serpents, were by looking up on a brazen serpent set on a pole preserved in life; which (in our Saviour's most authentical interpretation) did represent the salvation which should proceed from our beholding and believing on him lifted up on the cross, to us, who had been stung and mortally struck with that old serpent's poisonous temptations. The Paschal lamb, (that most proper emblem of Christ our Passover, that most meek and innocent, most unblemished and spotless Lamb, slain for the sins of the world,) it was to be killed by the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel; its blood was to be dashed on the side-posts and cross-beams of every door; its body was not to be eat raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roasted whole, and dressed on a spit; nor were any of its bones to be broken; which circumstances, (with such caution and care prescribed,) how they suit and fitly adumbrate the manner of our Saviour's passion, I need not farther than by the bare mention of them to declare.

Lastly, The consideration of our Saviour's thus suffering is apt to teach and affect us; to admonish us of our duty, and to excite devotion in us: no contemplation is more fruitful or efficacious toward the sanctification of our hearts and of our lives: the gospel itself is, in St. Paul's language, ὁ λόγος τοῦ

σταυροῦ, ('the word of the cross;') and he calls both this and that 'the power of God to salvation.'

1. What good affection therefore may not the meditation thereon raise, what virtue not produce in us!

2. How can it otherwise than inflame our hearts with love, to think what acerbity of pain, what indignity of shame our Saviour there willingly undertook and endured for us! No imagination can devise a greater expression of charity; and if love be productive of love, what effect should the consideration of such a love have! Nor can we find a surer ground of trust, and a greater encouragement to hope in God, than this: he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the suffering of such pains and indignities for us, how can we distrust his bounty, or despair of his mercy in any case? What higher favor could he do, how show greater condescension, how more surely testify his willingness, his delight to do us good? how consequently lay stronger grounds of hope and confidence in us, than by his own free undertaking and undergoing all this for us?

3. What detestation of our sins must it also raise in us, that brought such torture, such reproach on him! Judas the wretch who betrayed him, the Jewish priests who accused and prosecuted him, Pilate the judge who condemned him, the wicked people that abused and insulted over him, the cruel hands that smote him, the pitiless hearts that mocked him, the blasphemous tongues that railed on him, those who were instruments of his affliction, how do we detest them, and curse their memories! But our sins, which were the first and main causes of that woful tragedy, how much more reason have we to abhor and abominate them! He 'was delivered for our offences,' (they were the traitors indeed which by Judas's hands did deliver him;) it was they that cried *crucifige*, ('Crucify him, crucify him,') with a clamor more loud and more effectual than did the Jews; (it was they that did by their borrowed mouths accuse and prosecute him;) 'He that knew no sin was made sin for us;' (was condemned as a sinner for us: it was we that by our sins did adjudge and sentence him;) Pilate was but their agent and spokesman in it; 'He became a curse for us;' (all the mockery, derision, and contumely he endured proceeded

from us; the silly people were but properties, representing and acting our parts;) 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:' it was they that by the fierce soldiers and rude rabble, as by senseless engines, did smite and scourge him; by the nails and thorns did pierce his flesh and rend his sacred body.

4. What can in reason be more effectual to breed in us remorse and penitent sorrow, than reflexion on such horrible effects proceeding from our sins? how can we but vehemently grieve, when we remember ourselves by them to have been the betrayers, the slanderers, the scorners, the murderers of God's dear Son, of so innocent and lovely a person, of our best friend, and most loving Saviour?

5. And if ingenuity will not work so much, and melt us into contrition hereby, yet sure this thought must needs produce fear in us: Can we but tremble to think of the fierceness of God's displeasure, the severity of divine judgment, the heinous guilt of our sins, all so plainly discovered, so livelily set out in this dismal spectacle? If the view of an ordinary execution is apt to beget some apprehensions of terror, dread of the law, reverence to authority, what dreadful impressions should this extraordinary example of divine justice make on us?

6. How can it also but deter us from wilful commission of sin, to consider that by it we do ἀνασταυροῦν, recrucify, (in a manner renew all that pain and shame; bring up again on the stage all that direful tragedy,) 'crucify,' I say, 'afresh the Son of God, and again expose him to open shame; that by it we trample on the Son of God, and prize the blood of the covenant' (that most precious blood, so freely, yet so sadly shed for us) as a common (a trivial and worthless) thing; despising all his so kind and so painful endeavors for our salvation, defeating his gracious purpose, rendering all his so bitter and loathsome sufferings, as to their principal intent, (our good and benefit,) altogether, yea more than vain and fruitless?

7. What, farther, can be more operative in producing disesteem and disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous pleasures; in reconciling us to the worst condition it can bring us into; in comforting us under the heaviest pressures of affliction? Who can admire those splendid trifles,

which he never regarded in his life, which only served to mock him at his death? Who can relish those delights, which he never living vouchsafed to taste of, and dying chose to feel their contraries? Who will dare to vilify a state of sorrow and disgrace, which he by the voluntary susception thereof (in such extremity) hath so dignified and graced; by which we resemble, become conformable unto, partake with him, concur with, and, in a manner, complete his design? Who can much prefer being admired, applauded, or made much of by men, before derision, reproach, or persecution from them, (especially for adherence to truth and righteousness?) Who can be very ambitious of honor and repute, or covetous of wealth, or addicted to pleasure, who observes him (the Son of God, the heir of all things, the Lord of glory) choosing rather to ascend a cross than a throne; inviting the clamors of spite and scorn, instead of acclamations of praise; embracing the reputation of a malefactor and a slave, before the dignity and respect of a prince; that regards him hanging naked and forlorn on a gibbet, besmeared with his own blood, groaning under extremity of pain, yielding, as the Prophet foretold of him, 'his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;' (hiding not his face from shame and spitting?) Will not the imagination of such a sight sully the lustre of all earthly pomps and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions: quash all the content we can take in our wild and extravagant merriments?

8. If such affliction and hardship were to him a school of obedience, (ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε, he learnt from what he suffered, obedience:) a means of perfection, ('It became God,' saith the Apostle, 'to perfect the captain of our salvation by suffering;') a procurement of divine favor, (therefore, himself tells us, 'the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life;' and the manner sure did increase that love;) a step to glory, (for, it is said, 'was not Christ to suffer these things, and (so) to enter into his glory? Therefore God exalted him;' 'We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.') If it yielded such advantages to him, and may by our conformity and compliance with him afford the like to us, what reason can there be, that we should be anywise discomposed,

discouraged, or disconsolate under it? Much more sure there is, 'that we should,' with St. Paul, 'boast, rejoice, exult, and skip' (ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι and σκιρτᾷν) 'for joy in our tribulations;' 'He that doth not carry his cross, and go after me, cannot be my disciple;' and, 'He that doth not take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me:' saith our Saviour: he that doth not take it up readily, when by providence it is presented; that doth not bear it contentedly, when it is imposed, cannot be our Saviour's disciple, (showing such an incapacity to learn the lessons of humility and patience read by him; to transcribe the copies of submission to divine will, self-denial, and self-resignation, so fairly set him by Christ's instruction and example:) he is nowise worthy of him, (hath not the courage, the sincerity, the constancy required of a Christian; one pretending to such benefits, privileges, and rewards from Christ, his Lord and Saviour.) The willing susception, the cheerful sustaining of the cross, is the express condition and character of our Christianity, (whence use hath been to sign them who enter into it with the figure of the cross.) It is the special ensign of our warfare under Christ against his and our common enemies; the distinct badge of our profession; the chief object of our faith, our knowlege, our preaching, (as St. Paul discourses in the first and second chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians;) the main ground of our hope; the sole matter of our glory, (ἐμοὶ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι;) 'Far be it from me to glory,' saith St. Paul, 'save in the cross of Christ:' 'Let it be to the Jews a scandal,' (offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity;) 'let it be folly to the Gentile Greeks,' (seem absurd to men imbued and puffed up with carnal conceits and maxims of worldly wisdom,) that God should put his own beloved Son into so sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, happiness, and glory should issue from such springs of extreme sorrow and shame; that a person in outward semblance so contemptible, exposed to so infamous and slavish usage, should be the Son of God, the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world; let this, I say, be scandalous and distasteful to some prejudiced persons; let it

seem strange and incredible to other self-conceited men; to us it must be grateful and glorious; to us, who discern by a clearer light, who are endued with a purer sense, derived from the divine Spirit, whence we may, with a comfortable satisfaction of mind, perceive that God could not in a higher measure, in a fitter method, illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice, (his infinite mercy toward his poor creatures, his heavy indignation and severe justice against iniquity;) that virtue could not be taught, nor exemplified, nor commended and inculcated any other way with so great advantage. It were easy to allege the suffrages of Plato, Seneca,* and other such men, (wise only by improvement of natural reason,) acknowleging that perfection of virtue can neither be wrought nor showed otherwise than by suffering the bitterest afflictions; that God (as a wise Father) therefore useth to exercise them whom he most loveth with them: nor hard were it to produce examples of men, (even among the Pagans,) most famous and honorable in the judgment of posterity for their wisdom and virtue, who have been tried in this furnace, and shone thereby more brightly, suffering by the iniquity, ingratitude, and envy of their times, both in their reputation, liberty, and life, infamous punishments, ignominious deaths; though none of them of choice and on design to advance the interest of goodness, but by an accidental force put on them; none in a manner so signal, with circumstances so rare, with an event so wonderful: so that even according to the passable dictates of common wisdom this dispensation was not so unaccountable; neither ought the Greeks, in consistency with themselves and their own most admired philosophers, have deemed the doctrine of the cross to be foolish, or unreasonable: since thereby a charity and humanity so unparalleled, (far exceeding theirs, who have been celebrated for love to their country, or a more prevalent love of praise dovoting their lives,) a meekness so incomparable, a resolution so invincible, a patience so heroical, were manifested for instruction and direction of men: since never were the vices and vanities of the world (both so destructive to the quiet and welfare of mankind) so remarkably disparaged and condemned:

* Plat. 2. de rep. Sen. de Provid.

since never virtue had so powerful an effect (the expiation of the whole world's sin and reconciliation of mankind to God, such as no other performance, no sacrifice could ever pretend to) nor so glorious a reward; sovereign dignity to him that exercised it, everlasting happiness to them that follow it: since, I say, there be such excellent uses, fruits, and consequences of the cross undergone by our Saviour, we have no reason to be offended or to be ashamed thereof; but rather heartily to approve, and humbly to adore, as well the wisdom of God, as other his glorious attributes, so conspicuously demonstrated and displayed therein.

But I have not been able to contain myself, and have dwelt too long on this most rich and fruitful argument.

Dead and buried, &c.

Our Saviour's passion (as we did observe formerly) was in the first draughts of this Creed expressed by one single word, *crucifixus:* but afterwards (whether to discountenance some heretical devices contradicting the real truth of our Saviour's death, or for the more full and clear representation of the thing itself) its description was dilated, and expressed by three words, signifying the quality thereof; (he suffered; that is, was dealt with as a malefactor;) another showing the manner of it, (he underwent that most painful and disgraceful punishment of crucifixion;) a third denoting the final completion thereof, (he lost his life thereby.) The two former we have largely discoursed on; the last remains, being the consummation of his grievous passion, the bottom of that bitter cup he willingly drank off for us; foreseeing the approach of which, he pronounced the τετέλεσται, 'It is finished.' Concerning which we may consider, 1. The nature of it, (wherein it did consist.) 2. Some peculiar adjuncts and respects thereof, (which commend it to our regard, and render it considerable.) 3. The causes and ends, (whence moved, and why he died.) 4. The fruits and effects of it, (what did especially spring from, what consequences there were of his dying.) Lastly, the practical influences, the belief and consideration thereof may or should have on us.

I. As for the nature of it; we must affirm and believe assuredly, that it was a true and proper death, not in kind different from that death to which all we mortal men by the law and condition of our nature are subject, and must all sometime undergo; ('For what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? that shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?') that death which is signified by the cessation of vital operations, (of all motion, natural or voluntary; of all sense and knowlege, appetite and passion:) that death which is caused by the violent disunion or dislocation; by distempering; by whatsoever indisposing the parts, humors, spirits of the body, so that the soul can no longer in and by them exercise those functions, for which its conjunction thereto was intended, and cannot therefore fitly reside therein: that death which is supposed to consist in the dissolution of that vital band (whatever it be) whereby the soul is linked and united to the body; or in that, which is thereon consequent, the departure, separation, and absence of the soul from the body; each of that couple, on their divorce, returning home to their original principles, as it were; 'the body to the earth, whence it was taken; and the spirit unto God who gave it,' as it is in the Preacher. Such causes antecedent are specified in the story; such signs following are plainly implied; such a state is expressed, in the same terms, whereby our death is commonly signified. The same extremity of anguish, the same dilaceration of parts, the same effusion of blood (which would destroy our vital temper, quench our natural heat, stop our animal motion, exhaust our spirits, extrude our breath) did work on and necessarily produce the like effects on him, (as having assumed the common infirmities and imperfections of our nature;) in regard to which violences inflicted on him, he is said to be slain, to be dispatched, to be cut off, to be taken away, to be destroyed, to be slaughtered, to be sacrificed, (ἀποκτείνεσθαι, διαχειρίζεσθαι, ἀναιρεῖσθαι, ἀπολέσθαι, σφάττεσθαι, θύεσθαι,) which words fully import a real and proper death to have ensued on those violent usages toward him. And by the ordinary signs of death, apparent to sense, the soldiers judged him dead; and therefore, ὡς εἶδον ἤδη τεθνηκότα, 'seeing him already dead, they forbare to break his legs;' by the same all the world being satisfied thereof; both his spiteful ene-

mies, that stood with delight waiting for this utmost success of their malicious endeavors to destroy him, and his loving friends, that with compassionate respect attended on him through the course of his suffering; and those who were ready to perform their last offices of kindness in procuring the decent burial of his body. His transition also into, and his abiding in, this state, are expressed by terms declaring the propriety of his death, and its agreement with our death, such as was before described; St. Mark tells us, that ἐξέπνευσε, (*animam efflavit*, he breathed out his soul, or breathed out his last breath; he expired:) St. Matthew, ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα; (he let go his spirit, or gave up the ghost, *animam egit*:) St. John, παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα; (he delivered up his spirit into God's hands:) St. Luke mentions it done with a formal and express resignation; 'Father, into thy hands I commend (or depose, παρατίθεμαι) my spirit.' Himself also frequently expresses his dying by 'laying down his life;' by 'bestowing his life a ransom;' which shows him really to have parted with it. His death likewise (as ours commonly by *excedere e vivis*, and like phrases) is termed ἔξοδος, a going out of life, a leaving the society of men, Luke ix. 31. Moses and Elias are said to tell τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem; and μετάβασις, a passing over from this world; 'When,' saith St. John, 'Jesus knew that his time was come, ἵνα μεταβῇ, that he should depart from this world.' His death also by himself is enigmatically described by the destruction (or demolishment) of his bodily temple, answerable to those circumlocutions concerning our common death; in St. Paul, 'the dissolution of our earthly house or tabernacle,' (or transitory abode;) in St. Peter, ἀπόθεσις τοῦ σκηνώματος, the laying down, or putting off, our tabernacle.

It were also not hard to show, how all other phrases and circumlocutions by which human death is expressed either in the Scripture, or in usual language, or indeed among philosophers and more accurate speakers, are either expressly applied, or by consequence from what is expressed appear applicable, to our Saviour: such, for instance, as these in Scripture; ἀνάλυσις, being resolved into our principles, or the returning of them thither, whence they came; ἀπόλυσις, a being freed, licensed, or dismissed hence; ἐκδημία ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, a going

abroad, or abiding abroad; a peregrination, or absenting from the body; an ἔκδυσις, putting off, or being divested of the body: an ἀφανισμὸς, disappearing, ceasing (in appearance) to be; going hence, and not being seen; a falling on sleep; resting from labors; to sleep with his fathers; a being added unto our fathers, gathered to our people; being taken or cut out of the land of the living; going down into the pit; lying down, resting, sleeping in the dust, &c. making our bed in darkness.

These and such like phrases occurring in Scripture, (which might be paralleled out of common speech and more learned discourses,) describing either the entrance into, or the abiding in, the state of that death, to which all men are obnoxious, might easily be showed applicable to the death of our Saviour. But I will not farther insist on confirmation of a point so clear, and never questioned but by the wild and presumptuous fancies of some heretics.

Our Saviour's death then was a true, real, and proper death, suitable to that frail, passable, mortal nature, which he vouchsafed to undertake for us; to the condition of sinful flesh, in the likeness of which he did appear; separating his soul and body, and remitting them to their original sources. His passion was indeed *ultimum supplicium*, an extreme capital punishment, the highest in the last result which either the fiercest injustice or the severest justice could in this world inflict; for to kill the body is, as our Saviour teaches us, the extreme limit of all human power and malice; the most and worst man can do; they have not περισσότερόν τι, any thing beyond that which they can attempt on us: and so far they proceeded with our Saviour: [the willing undergoing of which also is the highest expression of kindness, (if it be done on that account;) for, 'Greater love than this hath no man, than that one lay down his life for his friends:' the greatest attestation to the truth: the perfectest instance of obedience, submission, and patience respectively: to assert truth, to follow righteousness, to adhere to conscience, to resist sin, μέχρις αἵματος, as far as to blood, (as it is in the 12th to the Hebrews,) not to love our life, ἄχρι θανάτου, (unto the death, when death is threatened,) is the utmost that man can do.] But,

II. We may consider those peculiar adjuncts and respects of our Saviour's death, (annexing thereto hereafter in our dis-

course, for avoiding repetition, his whole passion generally taken, whereof his death was the chief part and final completion ;) those adjuncts, I say, and those respects which commend it to our regard, and amplify the worth thereof; its being a result of God's eternal deliberation and decree; a matter of free consent and compact between God the Father and his only Son; its being anciently prefigured and predicted; its being executed by God's hand and providence guiding, by man's action concurring; its being the death of a person so holy and innocent, so high and excellent; of the Son of God, yea, of God himself.

1. It was a result of God's eternal counsel and decree; no casual event, no expedient suddenly devised; but a design from all eternity, contrived by divine wisdom, resolved on by divine goodness: as God did then foresee our lapse and misery, so he did as soon determine our remedy; as the whole of that mysterious dispensation concerning Christ, so did especially this main part thereof, proceed *κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων*, according to an eternal purpose: for our Saviour was 'a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:' 'We were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot;' *προεγνωσμένου μὲν*, 'foreordained indeed before the foundation of the world;' our Saviour went (he tells us) to suffer *κατὰ τὸ ὡρισμένον*, according to what was determined; it was 'by the determinate counsel and foreknowlege of God,' that he was delivered up to those wicked hands that slew him: nor did the conspiracy of Herod and Pilate with the nations and people of the Jews effect any thing therein beyond *ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ, καὶ ἡ βουλὴ Θεοῦ προώρισε γένεσθαι*, whatever the hand and the counsel of God had predestinated to be performed. God's so great care and providence, so expressly commended to our observation, do argue the high worth and consequence of this death.

2. It was a matter of free consent and compact between God and our Saviour. God freely proffered, if he would undertake to redeem his creature, a comfortable and honorable success thereto; he willingly embraced the condition; 'When thou shalt make thy soul an offering, thou shalt see thy seed and prolong thy days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper

in thy hand: thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied;' that was God's proposition: 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,' was our Saviour's answer in correspondence and consent thereto. God, in consideration of his sufferings, did διατίθεσθαι βασιλείαν, covenant to him a kingdom; commit to him a sovereign authority, assign him an universal dominion: in virtue of which transaction it was, that 'Jesus, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honor;' that 'he pouring out his soul unto death, God divided him a portion with the great;' that 'he being obedient to the death, God exalted him, and gave him a name above all names.' In this regard are God's elect and faithful people said to be given to him, as a retribution to him who gave himself for them; that we are said 'to be bought by him, and the church purchased by his blood.' There was therefore a covenant between God and his Son concerning this affair: and of great consideration surely must that affair be, wherein such Persons (if I may so speak) so interest themselves, do traffic, as it were, and stand on terms with each other.

3. Farther; that the excellency and efficacy of this death and passion might appear, it was by manifold types foreshadowed, and in divers prophecies foretold. Indeed most famous passages of providence (especially the signal afflictions of eminent persons representing our Saviour) seem to have been preludes unto and prefigurations of his passion: the blood of the righteous protomartyr Abel, shed by envy, for acceptable obedience to God's will, and crying for vengeance, seems to have prefigured that blood, which cried also, though with another voice, and 'spake better things than the blood of Abel;' not complaints and suits for vengeance, but entreaties and intercessions for mercy. Isaac, (the only son, the son of promise,) his oblation in purpose, and death in parable, (as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaks,) did plainly represent our Saviour, the promised seed, his being really offered, and afterward restored to life. Joseph's being sold and put into slavery by his envious brethren; being slanderously accused and shut in prison, ('whose feet they hurt with fetters; the iron entered into his soul;') and this by God's disposal, in order to his exaltation, that he might be a means to preserve life, and prepare conve-

nient habitation for the children of Israel, doth resemble him, who by suffering entered into glory; who being thereby perfected, became author of salvation to his brethren, all true Israelites; who went to prepare mansions of rest and light, a heavenly Goshen, for them. David's persecutions preceding his royal dignity and prosperous state, (which he expresses in no lower strain than by saying, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid: the sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me,') how they may adumbrate the more real extremities of our Saviour's affliction, previous to his glorious exaltation, I leave you to consider; as also the rest of such passages, of a like mysterious importance: however all the sacrifices of old, instituted by God, we may more confidently affirm to have been chiefly preparatory unto and prefigurative of this most true and perfect sacrifice; by virtue indeed of which those ὑποδείγματα and σκιαὶ, those umbratic representations obtained any validity or effect: if they did not signify this in design, they could signify nothing in effect: for as 'without shedding of blood there was no remission,' (God's anger could not be appeased, his justice could not be satisfied without it; it being blood that maketh atonement for the soul, God so requiring, as it is in the Law, Levit. xvii. 11.) which the institution of those sacrifices did speak and signify; so it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin; that those legal gifts and sacrifices should perfect the conscience of him that did the service; that is, intirely assure him of pardon and impunity. The souls of beasts were not in value suitable, could not fitly be surrogated in the stead of men's souls, which had offended, and were therefore liable to death: the effusion of their blood could not reasonably satisfy a man's conscience, sensible of guilt, and fearful of God's displeasure, that by it God was fully appeased: they must therefore refer unto a better sacrifice, more sufficient in itself, more acceptable to God, in virtue of, in respect to which sin might be thoroughly expiated, God's vengeance removed, man's mind comforted and contented. The high-priest's solemn entrance, once a year, into the holy of holies, not without blood, to atone for his own and the people's ignorances, did imply that our

great High-Priest should make a bloody atonement for the sins of mankind, and passing through the veil of mortal flesh, should enter into the true *sancta sanctorum* of heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us. The Paschal lamb especially, in its substance, (as a lamb, meek and gentle;) in its quality, without blemish or spot, (holy and innocent;) in its manner of preparation and dressing, (being killed by all the assembly, having its blood sprinkled on the doors of every house; being roasted with fire; having bitter herbs for its sauce;) with other observable circumstances, was a most apposite emblem of Christ our Passover, who not only by his death did signify and mind us of, but really effect, our deliverance from the mystical Egypt, our state of spiritual bondage. So did ancient types exhibit; and plain predictions also did express the same death and suffering of our Saviour; 'Those things,' saith St. Peter, 'which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled:' not one prophet only, but all (either plainly, or covertly; either directly, or by consequence) have showed it: it is our negligence or stupidity, if we do not discern it; 'O fools, and slow of heart,' saith our Saviour, 'to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ought not Christ (according to their predictions) to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?' That David, an illustrious representative of the Messias, doth often, as belonging to himself, describe mortal agonies and suffering, not applicable κατὰ λέξιν, in direct historical meaning, to his own person, and therefore in reason, according to a higher and truer sense, to be understood of the Messias; that Daniel expressly foretells both the thing and the time, that and when the Messias should be cut off; that Isaiah in several places doth insinuate, and in the famous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah doth clearly describe, the manner and kind of our Saviour's passion, is so evident, that the Jews themselves have acknowleged there must be one Messias to suffer, as another to triumph and reign in glory; being so gross as not to apprehend the consistency between antecedent suffering and consequent glory; (between a night of darkness and sorrow, and a day of light and joy breaking out from it;) not to distinguish between an external pomp in this, and an eternal majesty

in the future state. But to us God's so forward care, by the Spirit of Christ in his Prophets, προμαρτύρεσθαι, as St. Peter speaks, to forewitness (to testify beforehand) the sufferings of our Saviour, and the glories succeeding, doth imply with what attention we should regard, with what firmness of faith embrace this article.

4. We may consider also that this death was executed by God's especial providence directing and disposing it; though not without man's active concurrence. The treacherous disposition and covetous appetite of Judas; the envious humor and blind zeal of the priests; the wanton fickleness and wild rudeness of the people; the fearful and selfish temper of the governor, were but instruments, by which God's own hand did inflict this sore chastisement on his own Son for us; it was the Lord that 'laid on him the iniquities of us all;' by God he 'was stricken, smitten, and afflicted.' The Jews with their rulers proceeded rashly and ignorantly, but God advisedly did accomplish it, (as St. Peter in the Acts:) he did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us: he suspended his bowels of pity, (as it were,) he withdrew his face of kindness from him, out of mercy and benignity to us; he used him severely, that he might deal favorably with us. Yet did man also actively concur herein; all mankind (by their representatives, as it were) was involved, as in the guilt for which, so in the guilt by which he suffered: there was a general conspiracy practised of Jew and Gentile against the life of their Saviour; 'Of a truth,' saith St. Peter, 'against thy holy child, whom thou hast anointed, were gathered together both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and with the people of Israel.' In the Jews, man's horrid ingratitude, in the Gentiles, his wretched infirmity did appear; which by their active efficacy did signify the meritorious influence they had; that it was man's iniquity and infirmity which did cause our Saviour's death: which thus, as a work of divine Providence, (the most admirable work ever done by Providence,) as an act of human pravity, (the most heinous act ever committed by man,) is considerable.

5. But immediately the quality and condition of our Saviour's person do most commend and advance the worth of his death; 'If,' as the psalmist sings, 'precious in the sight of the Lord

is the death of his saints;' if the spotless candor, the unblemished integrity of a lamb, do make its blood precious, render it a fit and acceptable sacrifice; how valuable shall the death of a person so holy and innocent, 'who did not so much as know sin, in whose mouth no guile was ever found, who was removed (at infinite distance) from sinners! If the life of a king be, as David's people told him, worth ten thousand lives, and it be high treason to imagine his death; how considerable must the death be of a person so transcendent in dignity, the Lord of glory, the Prince of life! 'Ye denied the Holy and the Just One; ye slew the Prince of life:' 'They crucified the Lord of glory:' so the Apostles aggravate the business. But an infinity of worth and efficacy must needs accrue to the death of our Saviour, from his being the Son of God, from his being God. That the immortal God should die, the Most High so debased, as it cannot be heard without wonder, so it could not be done without huge reason and mighty effect: well might one drop of that royal blood of heaven suffice to purchase many worlds, to ransom innumerable lives of men, to expiate an infinity of sins.

III. But let us consider the causes moving to it, and the ends designed thereby; together with the effects consequent thereon, (those in nature being either the same, or joined with the ends thereof.) The determining it by God, the undertaking of it by our Saviour, were acts most absolutely free and voluntary. On the Father's part: 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him,' saith the prophet; 'Behold, I come to do thy will;' (that is, to offer, not the blood of beasts in sacrifice, but my own body, 'according to thy will,' as it is expounded in the Epistle to the Hebrews:) 'This command,' saith our Saviour, 'I received of my Father,' viz. 'to lay down my life:' and, 'The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?' On our Saviour's part: 'None,' saith he, 'taketh my life from me, (it is by no necessity or compulsion;) but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and have power to resume it:' and, 'The bread which I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world:' 'The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.' The yielding of his flesh to death was a gift absolutely free; 'Who gave

himself for our sins, according to the will of God and our Father.'

Thus did this death proceed from the joint wills of God and his Son: yet as the volitions of every wise and understanding agent are in a manner determined or directed by some cause, (and grounded on some reason,) so the causes and reasons of these voluntary acts in Scripture are declared to have been several. The main impulsive causes were two, (one internally disposing, the other externally inviting,) God's goodness, and man's distress. Mankind lying in a sad and forlorn estate; enslaved to sin, oppressed by Satan, subject to a rigorous law, exposed to the severity of justice, tormented by the sense of guilt, fearful of divine wrath and vengeance; in short, condemned by the sentence of heaven, and by the suffrage of his own conscience, to punishment unavoidable, to misery intolerable: he, I say, lying in so desperately uncomfortable a condition, God's infinite goodness regarded his poor creature; his bowels of compassion yearned toward him; thence was he moved to provide such a remedy sufficient and suitable to his delivery, for the curing all those distempers, the removing all those mischiefs. The main spring of all this wonderful performance (as of all other providential dispensations and actions *ad extra*) was that most excellent perfection of God; which in respect to this matter is sometimes termed χρηστότης, benignity or bounty, (implying the great benefit we receive thence;) sometimes favor or grace, (signifying the pure freeness in dispensing it, without any desert on our part; 'By the grace of God, he tasted death for every man;') sometimes love and philanthropy, (intimating the regard God had to us as his creatures, and as capable of being benefited and bettered by him; 'Herein God commends his love toward us, in that we being yet sinners Christ died for us:' 'Christ loved us, and delivered up himself an offering and sacrifice to God;') sometimes mercy, (connoting our bad deserts, our obnoxiousness to justice and punishment;) sometimes pity, (signifying the need we had thereof, our misery and distress.) Such were the impulsive causes, disposing and occasioning: to which we may add our sins as the meritorious cause: 'He died for our sins;' 'He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities;' 'the

chastisement of our peace was on him;' he died for us, not as men only, not as miserable, but as sinners: had we been guiltless, there had wanted sufficient cause and just reason of his death: God would not have been angry, justice could have had no pretence or hold; we should not have suffered ourselves, nor could he have suffered for us: Death is the debt (the wages) due to sin; which he therefore paid, because we owed and could not discharge it; 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and (therefore) the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

As for the ends aimed at, and the effects produced hereby, they are in the Scripture account and expression reckoned various; principally these.

1. The illustrations of God's glory, (by demonstrating and displaying his most excellent attributes and perfections; 'Whom God,' saith St. Paul, 'hath set forth a propitiation, *εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ*, for a demonstration of his righteousness;' that is, of his goodness, his justice, his sincerity, his constancy, and all such laudable perfections which may be used in dealing with others; for so I take righteousness to signify.)

2. The dignifying and exaltation of our Saviour himself; by acquiring unto him (as it were) a new right unto, and instating him in, an universal dominion; in a transcendent glory, joy, and happiness, accruing to him by desert and reward; For to this end, St. Paul tells us, 'Christ died,' *ἵνα νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ*, 'that he might be Lord of the dead and living;' for the suffering of death he was 'crowned with glory and honor;' the Prince of our salvation was 'perfected by suffering; for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross:' he 'was obedient unto death; therefore God exalted him:' it was agreed and designed that he should see the 'travail of his soul, and be satisfied.'

3. The salvation of mankind; 'thereby redeeming us,' as St. Paul speaks, (or buying us out,) 'from the curse of the law,' (procuring indemnity and impunity for us,) justifying us in God's sight, and reconciling us to God's favor; 'Being justified,' saith the same Apostle, 'by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath:' 'For if, being enemies, we were

reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' bearing, taking away, expiating, abolishing, procuring pardon for, 'purging the conscience from,' cleansing us from the stain, and freeing us from the power of sin and dead works: 'But now,' saith the author to the Hebrews, 'once in the end of the world hath he appeared, εἰς ἀθετήσιν ἁμαρτίας, to the putting away (or abolition) of sin by the sacrifice of himself:' and, 'The blood of Christ,' saith St. John, 'cleanseth us from all sin;' and, 'Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood:' and, 'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world:' 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:' 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of (who shall criminate, τίς ἐγκαλέσει) God's elect? who shall condemn? It is Christ that died.' In subordination unto, coincidence or concurrence with these ends, our Saviour also died, for the reparation of God's honor, recovery of his right, and satisfaction of his justice; for the ratifying the new covenant between God and us; (whence his blood is called 'the blood of the covenant,' or new testament;) for the reconciling and pacifying 'all things in heaven and earth;' removing all causes of dissension, inducing obligations of concord and charity; for pulling out the sting and removing the terror of death; suppressing and triumphing over the powers of hell: destroying (or defeating) him that had the power of death, the devil; and delivering them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to death; for engaging us to all righteousness and obedience, (especially to the most excellent and most difficult parts thereof, charity, meekness, patience, self-denial, utmost constancy and perseverance,) both from our obligation for what he did, and in imitation of his example; lastly, for attestation unto and confirmation of divine truth; sealing his heavenly doctrine by his blood, and witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession. Such ends did the death and passion of our Saviour aim at, such fruits did grow from it; which the time hath permitted me scarce cursorily to mention.

As for the practical influences the belief and consideration thereof should have on us, they are many and great.

It should oblige us to the highest degree of love and thankfulness, in regard to this highest expression of love to us: it should beget in us the greatest faith and hope in God; for that, 'He which did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up (to death) for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' It should work contrition and repentance in us for those sins which murdered our so good friend and loving Saviour: it should deter and make us carefully to avoid them, as those which in a manner exact another death from him, and crucify him afresh, and 'vilify the precious blood of the covenant:' it should discover to us their heinousness, and produce in us a vehement detestation and dread of them; as having provoked God to such a degree of displeasure; causing him to deal so severely with his own most dear Son; For if those things were done (such punishments were inflicted) on a green tree, (on a person so innocent, so precious, so little liable to the fire of vengeance,) what shall be done to the dry, (to us, that are so guilty, so combustible,) if we presume to displease God? It should engage us to a patient submission and resignation of ourselves to God's will and providence; 'Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, we should arm ourselves likewise with the same mind,' as St. Peter advises; and prepare for the deepest mortification, in conformity to his death, dying after him to the lusts and affections of the flesh, to the fashions and delights of the world; to the fullest measure of charity: 'For if God so loved us, (so as to die for us,) then ought we,' as St. John tells us, 'to love one another,' in a degree answerable; for, he adds, 'If he laid down his life for us, then ought we also to lay down our lives for our brethren:' in fine, we are hereby obliged to yield up ourselves wholly to the service of our Saviour; to the promoting of his interest and glory; since, as St. Paul teaches us, 'we are not our own, being bought with a price;' and therefore 'must glorify God in our body and in our spirits, which are God's:' (by a purchase so dear and precious;) since, as he again tells us, 'Christ died for all, that they which live might not live to themselves, but to him that died for them;' since, as St. Peter urges, 'we know that we are not redeemed by things corruptible, by silver and gold, but by the precious

blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish or spot,' from our vain conversation.

Buried. He descended into Hell.

THESE two particulars (which in the ancient Roman Creed, and in all the oriental forms, as also in other more ancient summaries of Christian doctrine) do appear either to have been conjoined and comprehended in the former of them, (buried,) or at least the latter to have been wholly omitted; it being afterwards inserted here out of the Aquileian form, (which in a manner had it, in the room of the former, that saying, instead of *sepultus est, descendit in inferna*,) or from elsewhere, (the latter ages mentioning both, either for more fulness and security, that nothing anywise material, touched in Scripture, concerning our Saviour's person or performances, especially done in that great season of action preceding his last farewell to this world, might seem neglected,) or perchance on occasion of (in favor to, or compliance with) some opinions about our Saviour's doings in the interval between his death and resurrection, current and passable in those times: these particulars however, I say, may seem added in respect chiefly (for the clearer illustration and surer confirmation) of those great articles precedent and subsequent concerning our Saviour's death and resurrection. For (as to the first) our Saviour's body being committed to the grave, the common repository of bodies, it plainly demonstrates the truth of his death, the reality and wonderfulness of his resurrection. No life could continue in a body shut up under ground till the third day: (sequestered from that air which ventilates and keeps from smothering our vital flame; from that comfortable light which excites and cherishes our natural heat; from that food which sustains and repairs our decaying parts;) therefore he must, being thus lodged in the chambers of death, be really dead: and to raise him thence, to rear the temple of his body from that utmost state of dejection, must be a work of divine and most wonderful power. And to this purpose, I suppose, St. Paul mentions our Saviour's burial as a point, which, among other great articles of our religion, he did use to preach and inculcate as a matter of faith;

'I delivered unto you first of all,' saith he, to the Corinthians, 'that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins; and that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the Scriptures.' His burial interceding gave light and confirmation to his death foregoing, and his resurrection following it, according to the Scriptures, St. Paul adds: for it had seemed good to God both by typical representation to foreshow and expressly to foretel our Saviour's interment; 'As Jonas' (saith he himself, the best expositor of God's meaning in such mystical adumbrations) 'was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth:' the whale's belly Jonas himself terms the belly of hell, ('Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice:' the belly of hell, or of the grave:) and, 'My flesh' (saith David, as representing our Saviour) 'shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' The grave was the bed wherein our Saviour's flesh did rest in expectation soon to rise again before any corruption should seize thereon; and the prophet Isaiah treating on his passion, with the causes, the manner, the consequences thereof, doth not omit the mention of this point; 'For,' says he, 'he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.' So God preordained, and so predicted concerning our Saviour's burial, for the confirmation of our faith, though perhaps other ends might fall in therewith, and other not inconsiderable uses may be made thereof. He did thereby yield a farther instance of condescension, a final submission to the law of human nature, in being brought to the dust, and returning to the ground, according to the general doom pronounced once on mankind; 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' He represented thereby, as the first-fruits from the dead, and the pattern of his followers, the common manner how, and whence we shall arise; 'when the time comes, that all which are in the graves shall hear his voice, and go forth,' as it is in the gospel: how all men being, as it were, sown in the ground, shall spring up again to another life. He did also thereby signify that mystical sepulture, which we undergo in baptism, being therein buried with him, as St. Paul speaks, being secluded from the

pleasures of sin, and having the vanities of the world removed from our eyes: the immersion in baptism was a kind of burial, and its being done thrice (according to primitive use) corresponded (as the ancients suppose) to our Saviour's lying three days in the grave: Τὸ γὰρ καταδύσαι τὸ παιδίον ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθιᾳ τρίτον, καὶ ἀναστήσαι, τοῦτο δηλοῖ τὸν θάνατον, καὶ τὴν τριήμερον ἀνάστασιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ: that the child doth enter thrice into the font, and rises up again; this represents the death and resurrection after three days of Christ, saith Athanasius; and,—*Illa tertio repetita demersio typum dominicæ exprimit sepulturæ, per quam Christo consepulti estis in baptismo;* that demersion thrice repeated expresses a type of our Lord's burial; as by which we are together buried with Christ, in baptism, saith St. Augustin. It also doth countenance and commend unto us those seemly respects (those offices of humanity) which all civil people have consented to perform towards the bodies of our brethren departed from us; in decently laying up their remainders; securing them from offence and disgrace; showing by our best regard to what is left of them the goodwill we bare them living, the good hope we have of them dead; as expecting to recover that *depositum* so carefully laid up by us. We see our Saviour was not unconcerned herein; and did commend to the everlasting esteem of posterity the pious respect of that good woman, who spent the precious ointment on him, as having reserved it for his burial. As for the manner of our Saviour's burial; that his body was by Pilate's grant, on the petition of an honorable counsellor, rescued from the cross, (where, according to the rigor of the Roman law, it was to abide till its consumption,) that no farther ignominy or injury should be offered unto him, after he had fully satisfied the will and justice of God, in undergoing such extremities of pain and disgrace for our redemption: that another good ruler, well affected to his person and doctrine, had prepared and did bring a plentiful and precious mixture of spices, wherewith, (according to the manner of the Jews towards persons of wealth and respect,) for decency and convenience, (to preserve the dead bodies from noisome savor, and to prevent sudden corruption,) to anoint his body: that his body was wrapped up in fine linen clothes, and laid in a new fair tomb, hewed out of a rock, (or

stony ground,) was thence inclosed, a great stone being rolled on the entrance thereof; (God thus ordering it, that all befitting honor should be done to that sacred body, which had borne so much for us, and served God so well; that the glorious temple of the divinity should not be profaned or polluted in any manner unseemly; that the grand miracle of raising our Saviour to life should come off with most advantage.) These things, plainly described in the gospel, might afford matter of profitable observation and discourse; but I cannot well insist on them; but proceed.

'He descended into hell,' *κατελθόντα εἰς ᾅδου.* This article, (or point of doctrine,) as was before noted, is of a later standing in the Creed; and doth not appear to have had place in any of the most ancient ones, public or private, (excepting that of Aquileia, into which also perhaps it might have come not long before Ruffinus's time;) and the meaning thereof hath always (both in more ancient times among the fathers, and in the middle times afterwards among the schoolmen, and lately among modern writers) been much debated, having given occasion to many prolix and accurate discourses: to recite the different opinions and explications thereof, with the reasons produced to maintain or disprove them, were a matter of greater pain and time than I can afford; and to decide the controversies about it, a matter of greater difficulty than I could hope to achieve. I could therefore, (both on these accounts, as also because I chose to insist rather on matters more clear in their nature, and practical in consequence;) I could therefore, I say, willingly wave this obscure and perplexed subject; yet however, to comply somewhat with expectation, I shall touch briefly on some things seeming conducible to the clearing or ending of the controversies hereabout.

Now whereas there may be a threefold inquiry, either concerning the meaning of the words (here set down) intended by those who inserted them; or concerning the most proper signification of the words themselves; or concerning the meaning they are with truth capable of in the case to which they here are applied;

1. The first I resolve (or rather remove) by saying, that it seems needless and endless to dispute what meaning they

(which placed these words here) did intend; since, 1. It is possible, (and might be declared so by many like instances,) and perhaps not unlikely, that they might both themselves on probable grounds believe, and for plausible ends propound to the belief of others, this proposition, without apprehending any distinct sense thereof; as we believe all the Scriptures, and commend them to the faith of others, without understanding the sense of many passages therein: and since, 2. perhaps they might by them intend some notion not certain, or not true, following some conceits then prevalent, but not built on any sure foundations: and since, 3. to speak roundly, their bare authority, whoever they were, (for that doth not appear,) could not be such as to oblige us to be of their minds, whatever they did mean or intend. We may owe much reverence, but no intire credence to their opinions. Yet, 4. if I were bound to speak my thought, I must confess, supposing they had any distinct meaning, they did mean to say that our Saviour's soul did, by a true and proper kind of motion, descend into the regions infernal, or beneath the earth; where they conceived the souls of men were detained: for this appears to have been the more general and current opinion of those times, which it is probable they did comply with herein, whencesoever fetched, however grounded.

As to the second inquiry, concerning the signification of the words, what may be meant by 'he descended;' whether our Saviour himself, according to his humanity, or his soul, or his body, called *he* by synecdoche: what by 'descended;' whether, (to omit that sense, which makes the whole sentence an allegory, denoting the sufferance of infernal or hellish pains and sorrows, as too wide from the purpose;) whether, I say, by descending may be signified a proper local motion toward such a term, or an action so called in respect to some such motion accompanying it; or a virtual motion by power and efficacy in places below: what by 'hell;' whether a state of being, or a place; if a place, whether that where bodies are reposed, or that to which souls do go; and if a place of souls, whether the place of good and happy souls, or that of bad and miserable ones; or indifferently and in common, of both those; for such a manifold ambiguity these words have, (or are made to have;)

and each of these senses are embraced and contended for: I shall not examine any of them, nor farther meddle in the matter, than by saying,

1. That the Hebrew word *sheol* (on the true notion of which the sense of the word *hell* in this place is confessed to depend) doth seem originally, most properly, and most frequently (perhaps constantly, except when it is translated, as all words sometimes are, to a figurative use) to design the whole region protended downward from the surface of the earth to a depth (according to the vulgar opinion, as it seems, of all ancient times over the world) indefinite and inconceivable; vastly capacious in extension, very darksome, desolate, and dungeon-like in quality, (whence it is also styled frequently the pit, the abyss, the darkness, the depths of the earth, &c.) I need not labor much to confirm the truth of this notion, since it is obvious that this *sheol* (when most absolutely and properly taken, the circumstances of the discourse implying so much) is commonly opposed to heaven, not only in situation, but in dimension and distance; as when Job, speaking of the unsearchableness of the divine perfections, saith, 'It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?' and the prophet Amos; 'Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up into heaven, thence will I bring them down.' I say farther,

2. Because the bodies (that is, the visible remainders) of men dying do naturally fall down, or are put into the bosom of this pit, (which is therefore an universal grave and receptacle of them,) therefore to die is frequently termed *καταβαίνειν εἰς ᾅδου*, or *κατάγεσθαι εἰς ᾅδου*, to descend, or to be brought down into this hell; which happening unto all men without exception, (for, as the psalmist says, there is no man that shall deliver his soul (or life, or himself,) from the hand (or from the clutches,) of this all-grasping hell,) therefore it is attributed promiscuously to all men, to good and bad alike; 'I will go down,' saith good Jacob, 'unto the grave' (to *sheol*, this common grave of mankind, *καταβήσομαι εἰς ᾅδου*) 'unto my son mourning:' and so frequently of others. Whence this hell is apt figuratively to be put for, and signify equivalently with, death itself, (it is once by the LXX. so translated, and by St. Peter, it

seems, after them,) or for the law, condition, and state thereof. I say farther,

3. That this word seems not in the ancient use to signify the place whither men's souls do go, or where they abide; for that,

1. It can hardly be made appear that the ancient Hebrews either had any name appropriate to the place of souls, or did conceive distinctly which way they went; otherwise than that, as the preacher speaks, 'they returned unto God who gave them;' that they abode in God's hand, (especially the souls of the just, as we have it in Wisdom; 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them,' &c.) And for that,

2. It is probable they did rather conceive the souls of men, when they died, did go upward than downward; as the same preacher intimates, differencing the spirit of man dying from the soul of beasts; that with its body descending, this ascending, as it were, unto God, to be disposed according to his pleasure and justice. And by Enoch's being taken unto God, (whose special residence is expressed to be in heaven above,) and by Elias's translation upward into heaven, (as it is in the history,) it seems they might rather suppose the souls of the righteous to ascend, than to be conveyed downward into subterraneous caverns; those *μυχοὶ*, that *βόθρος ᾅδου*, (those closets, that deep pit of hell, as the son of Sirach and the book of Wisdom do call them;) to ascend, I say, into consortship and society with the blessed angels, who are described to attend on God's throne in heaven, to the family of God in heaven, to that heavenly country, which they are said to desire earnestly, the heavenly Jerusalem. I add,

3. That, if those ancients had by *sheol* meant the receptacle or mansion of souls, it is not likely they would have used such expressions; 'The grave (*sheol*) cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth;' so Hezekiah: 'In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave (in *sheol* again) who shall give thee thanks;' so David: and the preacher more fully; 'There is no work, nor device, nor knowlege, nor wisdom in the grave, (in *sheol*,) whither thou goest:' (it were much he

should say so, if by *sheol* he meant the place of souls; except he should mean that souls after death were deprived of all life and sense.)

I must confess that afterwards (even before our Saviour's time) the word ᾅδης was assumed by the Jews to design (as among the Greeks) either the place of souls in common, or more strictly the place of souls condemned to punishment and pain for their evil lives here: (Josephus is observed often to use the word in the first of these senses; and in the New Testament it seems peculiarly applied to the latter; as in the parable of the rich man, 'who being ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ, in hell torments,' did thence 'lift up his eyes, and behold afar off Lazarus in Abraham's bosom:' but we cannot hence infer the same concerning the ancient meaning of the word *sheol*; especially considering how the Jews, after the prophetical days, in their dispersions becoming acquainted with the world, did somewhat improve in knowlege, and borrowed both notions and expressions from elsewhere; which expressions our Saviour and his Apostles would not depart from, when they were agreeable or accommodable to truth. But however it be determined concerning the proper sense in general of this principal word in the proposition, and of the rest depending thereon, as to their importance here; as to the present case, and the last main question propounded about the meaning, whereof the words are truly capable here; I answer briefly,

1. That if we interpret this descent into hell of our Saviour's interment, or being laid in the bosom of that general grave we speak of; or if (which little differs from that) we take these words for a phrase (taking its ground thence in a manner forementioned) importing no otherwise than when it was spoken of Jacob and others, that our Saviour did really pass into the state of death; we shall be sure therein not to err; the proposition being most certainly true, so understood: we shall also hereby be able fairly to satisfy the first and best (if not the only) reason of this proposition being commended to our belief: for that place of Scripture, or rather one place, being the same application of a place in the Psalms, (which seems to have been the occasion, and is the main ground of its assertion,) doth not refuse, but rather most commodiously admits this interpreta-

tion: for our Saviour's 'soul not being left in hell, and not seeing corruption,' is plainly by St. Peter himself interpreted of his resurrection; he (David) 'foreseeing this, spake of Christ's resurrection,' Acts ii. 31. and, in the like manner, by St. Paul, 'As concerning that he raised him from the dead, now no more to see corruption, he said on this wise,' (Acts xiii. 34.) that speech, I say, 'Our Saviour's soul not being left in hell, and not seeing corruption,' is by the Apostles interpreted by our Saviour's resurrection, (that is, by his being freed from the bands of death, and raised from the grave, before his flesh had seen corruption;) and is opposed by them to David's continuing in death and seeing corruption, (his body being corrupted and consumed in the grave;) the Apostles not designing to assert or prove more than our Saviour's resurrection: David, argue they, fell on sleep, and hath continued till now in that state; David remained unto this day in the grave, and so his body being reduced to dust saw corruption; ἐτελεύτησε καὶ ἐτάφη, saith St. Peter; 'he died and was buried,' without reversion: therefore that speech of his in the Psalm must not fully and ultimately be understood of him, (to whom they did not so exactly agree;) but of such an one, who did not abide in that deadly sleep; whose flesh, by being opportunely raised up, did avoid the sight (or undergoing) of corruption. And whereas it is said, 'Thou shalt not leave τὴν ψυχήν μου, my soul, (or my life,) nothing can be thence drawn greatly prejudicial to this exposition; for (to omit that bolder exposition of Beza, who by the soul understood the *cadaver*, or dead body, sometime translating the words, *Non derelinques cadaver meum in sepulchro*) nothing is more usual in the Hebrew than both for the flesh and for the soul, each of them synecdochically, to signify the person, (considered as sometime endued with life,) and in propriety of speech to stand for the body or for the soul; 'Every one that sinneth shall be put to death,' and 'That soul shall be cut off,' are terms equivalent in the Law: The soul that eateth, The soul that toucheth, and the like phrases, often occur: in fine, 'To deliver their soul from death,' as the psalmist speaks; 'God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave;' 'What man is he that shall not see death? that shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?' do seem expres-

should say so, if by *sheol* he meant the place of souls; except he should mean that souls after death were deprived of all life and sense.)

I must confess that afterwards (even before our Saviour's time) the word ᾅδης was assumed by the Jews to design (as among the Greeks) either the place of souls in common, or more strictly the place of souls condemned to punishment and pain for their evil lives here: (Josephus is observed often to use the word in the first of these senses; and in the New Testament it seems peculiarly applied to the latter; as in the parable of the rich man, 'who being ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ, in hell torments,' did thence 'lift up his eyes, and behold afar off Lazarus in Abraham's bosom:' but we cannot hence infer the same concerning the ancient meaning of the word *sheol*; especially considering how the Jews, after the prophetical days, in their dispersions becoming acquainted with the world, did somewhat improve in knowlege, and borrowed both notions and expressions from elsewhere; which expressions our Saviour and his Apostles would not depart from, when they were agreeable or accommodable to truth. But however it be determined concerning the proper sense in general of this principal word in the proposition, and of the rest depending thereon, as to their importance here; as to the present case, and the last main question propounded about the meaning, whereof the words are truly capable here; I answer briefly,

1. That if we interpret this descent into hell of our Saviour's interment, or being laid in the bosom of that general grave we speak of; or if (which little differs from that) we take these words for a phrase (taking its ground thence in a manner forementioned) importing no otherwise than when it was spoken of Jacob and others, that our Saviour did really pass into the state of death; we shall be sure therein not to err; the proposition being most certainly true, so understood: we shall also hereby be able fairly to satisfy the first and best (if not the only) reason of this proposition being commended to our belief: for that place of Scripture, or rather one place, being the same application of a place in the Psalms, (which seems to have been the occasion, and is the main ground of its assertion,) doth not refuse, but rather most commodiously admits this interpreta-

tion: for our Saviour's 'soul not being left in hell, and not seeing corruption,' is plainly by St. Peter himself interpreted of his resurrection; he (David) 'foreseeing this, spake of Christ's resurrection,' Acts ii. 31. and, in the like manner, by St. Paul, 'As concerning that he raised him from the dead, now no more to see corruption, he said on this wise,' (Acts xiii. 34.) that speech, I say, 'Our Saviour's soul not being left in hell, and not seeing corruption,' is by the Apostles interpreted by our Saviour's resurrection, (that is, by his being freed from the bands of death, and raised from the grave, before his flesh had seen corruption;) and is opposed by them to David's continuing in death and seeing corruption, (his body being corrupted and consumed in the grave;) the Apostles not designing to assert or prove more than our Saviour's resurrection: David, argue they, fell on sleep, and hath continued till now in that state; David remained unto this day in the grave, and so his body being reduced to dust saw corruption; ἐτελεύτησε καὶ ἐτάφη, saith St. Peter; 'he died and was buried,' without reversion: therefore that speech of his in the Psalm must not fully and ultimately be understood of him, (to whom they did not so exactly agree;) but of such an one, who did not abide in that deadly sleep; whose flesh, by being opportunely raised up, did avoid the sight (or undergoing) of corruption. And whereas it is said, 'Thou shalt not leave τὴν ψυχήν μου, my soul, (or my life,) nothing can be thence drawn greatly prejudicial to this exposition; for (to omit that bolder exposition of Beza, who by the soul understood the *cadaver*, or dead body, sometime translating the words, *Non derelinques cadaver meum in sepulchro*) nothing is more usual in the Hebrew than both for the flesh and for the soul, each of them synecdochically, to signify the person, (considered as sometime endued with life,) and in propriety of speech to stand for the body or for the soul; 'Every one that sinneth shall be put to death,' and 'That soul shall be cut off,' are terms equivalent in the Law: The soul that eateth, The soul that toucheth, and the like phrases, often occur: in fine, 'To deliver their soul from death,' as the psalmist speaks; 'God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave;' 'What man is he that shall not see death? that shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?' do seem expres-

sions parallel to this, 'Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell;' which yet seem to import no more, than the persons there spoken of respectively to be preserved from death. It is also observable that St. Paul, in the 13th of the Acts, neglecting the former part, 'Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell,' contents himself with the latter, 'Thou wilt not yield thy Holy One to see corruption;' intimating both parts to signify the same thing. If it be objected as an inconvenience to this explication of the words here in the Creed, that, admitting it, they signify no more, than what was before expressed in plain words, dead and buried; and so contain only a needless repetition; I answer, 1. That this objection concerns them who inserted the words here, who yet (even supposing the truth of this exposition) might be excusable, as suspecting it possible that our Saviour's being ἐν ᾅδῃ, according to St. Peter, might imply more than this, although they knew not what distinctly; who might also perhaps intend somewhat by these words different from this sense, but not so truly applicable to them, or agreeable to the truth of the thing: I answer, 2. That a greater inconvenience seems to arise from expounding them otherwise; it reflecting on the more ancient compilers both of this and most other creeds, who left them out, which they should not have done, if they contain any thing considerable and different from what is here otherwise expressed; whose credit is more, I conceive, to be tendered, than that of their juniors and followers; and so much the more, for that defect and omission in matters of this kind is less tolerable, than any redundance in expression. Which inconvenience may seem in a manner to reach higher, even to St. Paul himself, who (in the place forecited) declaring the sum of what he both learned and taught concerning our Saviour's last grand performances, only mentions his death, burial, and resurrection; 'I delivered unto you first, that Christ died according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day;' which enumeration of his, it seems, we may well acquiesce in, as sufficient and complete; and may thence with great probability infer, that no other descent of our Saviour into hell (beside his death and burial) was by him understood, or delivered in his catechetical discourses and preachings as a point of faith: so that what is

objected as an inconvenience, proves no small advantage to this exposition. But I say, farther,

2. To the main question, that, interpreting *hell* for the mansion, or habitation of souls, (to omit, that *sheol*, as I before noted, seems to signify otherwise in the Old Testament, and thence consequently the places in the Acts applied out of the Psalms not so proper to this purpose; whereby the main ground and support of the assertion itself, taken according to this sense, is removed; waving, I say, that consideration, and taking ᾅδης according to the meaning which we must confess it sometime to bear in the New Testament, yet) there seems to follow some inconvenience thereon: for then we must either take it for the place of damned spirits shut up in torment and despair, (according to which acception the proposition itself would be most certainly uncertain, as having no good ground for it; and most probably false, for that it is affirmed, our Saviour's soul, the same day he died, did go into paradise,) or we must take it for a place common to all souls, as well good and blessed, as bad and miserable; (for that it comprehends the place of torment, in the New Testament sense, is evident by the parable of Dives forecited.) But I think St. Augustin had reason to doubt whether it were consonant to the style of the New Testament, that *hades* there should be ever taken in a good or middle sense, at least; whereas it is said in the Revelation, that those two inseparable companions, death and *hades*, (that *hades*, which is there said to render up its dead to judgment,) 'were cast into the lake of fire,' it is hard to suppose paradise was cast in there; yea, hard to say *hades* was cast in there, supposing that word did then in its usual latitude of signification (as Christians understood it) comprehend paradise. Yea farther, this explication forces us on this inconvenience, that we must suppose paradise to be seated in a place beneath us, (or within the earth;) that paradise, which is either the same with the third heavens, in St. Paul, or confining thereto; it is hard, I say, to be forced by an interpretation of these words to consent that paradise (that *locus divinæ amœnitatis recipiendis sanctorum spiritibus destinatus;* the place of divine comfort and amenity, destinated to receive the spirits of the saints) should have its place in the darksome bowels of the earth; no commodious situation, it

seems, for delightsome walks and bowers; yet so must it be seated, that our Saviour's soul may be (at least in rigor and propriety of speech) said to descend thereinto. The word descend, taking hell for the ancient *sheol* forementioned, is proper enough, and hath ground both in authentic use and the nature of the thing; but taking hell in this sense, (for the place of souls,) is most probably improper, and hath no certain ground or authority to commend it; for it is said that our Saviour's soul was in hell, not that it descended thither; nor can it by consequence be inferred so to have done, according to this meaning of hell. However yet I add,

3. Seeing it is a most certain truth that our Saviour's soul did immediately go into the place appointed to receive happy souls after their recession from the body, and resignation into God's hands; if we take hell in a general and common sense for the place or state of souls departed; and descending, only for passing thereinto, (by a falling, as it were, from life, or together with the descent of the body; and thence styled descending; what appears visibly happening to the body being attributed to the soul;) if, I say, we thus interpret our Saviour's descent into hell, for his soul's going into the common receptacle and mansion of souls, we shall be sure not substantially to mistake. And this sense, I must confess, if the words can handsomely bear it, would be very proper to this place, as signifying somewhat distinct from what is otherwise expressed, and serving to the farther confirmation of those great articles adjoining, our Saviour's death and resurrection: it implying the perfect and utmost accomplishment of death, for the soul to have deserted the body, and to have been translated into those invisible regions, so distant hence, and whence—*revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras*, is a labor indeed, and a work not to be effected but by the most miraculous power of him, whose privilege it is, to kill, and make alive; to bring down to hell, and bring up; to lead unto the gates of hell, and bring back again.

This is all that I shall say about this point; for I will not be at the trouble to consider or examine those conceits, which pretend to acquaint us why and to what effect our Saviour descended into hell; that he went thither to preach unto, con-

vert, and redeem all or some of the damned souls from thence; (for some say that he emptied and quite depopulated that region of darkness; others are not so liberal as to free all thence, but some only, the fitter objects of compassion and favor; both saying that which hath very weak or no reasons to maintain it, very strong and plain objections to assail it;) that he went to free and usher into glory the souls of the patriarchs, and other good people, from that infernal *limbus*, in which they suppose them to have been till then detained, (a place by no likely means to be proved existent otherwhere than in the fancy of the inventors thereof;) that he went to affront, triumph over, and terrify the powers of darkness on their own ground, in their own dominions. These and the like conceits seem sufficiently discountenanced and confuted by saying, the Scripture nowhere plainly declares any such thing, and consequently that they have no good ground to insist on; (they pretend only one or two difficult and obscure places, which may be many ways otherwise expounded, so as not so much as to favor them;) whereas in teaching us that our Saviour preached on earth salvation to them, which in this life should be converted to believe on him and obey his laws; damnation irrecoverable to them, which should persist in infidelity and disobedience; that he merited by his obedience, and purchased by his blood, both a redemption from future distress, and a translation into bliss and glory; that he vanquished and triumphed over the powers of hell on the cross; in these things the Scripture is clear and copious: but concerning that pretended preaching unto, conversion, and deliverance of souls beneath; or that translation of souls out of any subterraneous closets, or prisons, (so they do not scruple to call them,) or that local triumph in the Devil's kingdom, it is quite silent, or very dark in expression; and therefore we may be somewhat backward in assenting to such conceits; which whoever first devised, we may suspect they did ἐμβατεύειν ἃ μὴ ἑωράκεσαν, invade things unseen by themselves, and in very deed invisible to any. But let it suffice to have discoursed thus much about this endless question.

The third Day he rose again from the Dead.

THIS article is one of the principal articles in its nature, its design, its consequence; the faith of which was intended as a means to produce faith in the rest; removing the doubts and difficulties that might obstruct it; for by our Saviour's resurrection the truth of all his pretences concerning his person, his office, his doctrine, were to the highest degree of satisfaction and conviction assured; no miracle could be greater in itself, (more signifying the power of God therein employed;) none more proper for production and confirmation of the faith required of us concerning the dignity of his person, the efficacy of his performances, the validity of his promises, the reality of his doctrine in relation to the future state. God (as St. Paul tells us, Acts xvii. 31.) did πίστιν παρέχειν πᾶσιν, afford to all a most persuasive and convincing argument of all truth concerning our Saviour, raising him from the dead.

1. If the meanness of his birth and parentage; the low garb and small lustre of his life; the bitter sorrows and shameful disgraces of his death, though accompanied with such excellent qualities, and such wonderful performances, as did appear in and were done by him, might (especially in those that stand at distance) breed any suspicion (as indeed they have afforded matter of argument to the adversaries of Christianity against it) concerning our Saviour, whether he were indeed (as he pretended) the Son of God, (so near in nature, in favor, in affection to God,) designed by him to be the Saviour of mankind, the Lord of all things, the Judge of the world; if, I say, such homely circumstances, that attended his person, such sad accidents, that befell him, may in the eyes of those who cast only superficial glances on the thing, and look not beyond outward appearances, beget doubtful apprehensions concerning our Saviour's person, or somewhat depress him in their conceit; the wonderful power and special favor of God toward him demonstrated in his resurrection, will discuss those mists, and raise him in their esteem; 'For though,' as St. Paul speaks, 'he was crucified out of weakness,' (that is, therein the infirmity of our nature being discovered,) 'yet he liveth by the

power of God ;' by his recovering life, his divine power is declared; it was an ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δύναμεως, an excessive greatness of power, which God exerted; an ἐνέργεια τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος, an activity of the might of strength, or of most mighty strength, which he set on work in the raising of Christ from the dead; (so the Apostle labors to express the unexpressible eminency of this miracle.) [Pliny, I remember, among instances of things which were impossible even to God himself, reckons these two; *Mortales æternitate donare, et revocare defunctos*, (to bestow eternity on mortals, and to recall the dead to life;) both which suppositions we see by our Saviour's resurrection, clearly confuted, yet so as the making them argues how high and hard a work in human conceit it was to effect it.] Indeed, St. Paul seems to suppose otherwise, when he thus puts the question; 'What? doth it seem incredible to you that God should raise the dead?' But there is an emphasis in the words παρ' ὑμῖν, with you; with you, whose minds were prepossessed with notions favorable to this doctrine; who had so many instances thereof; who had been instructed to hope future rewards from God. And as it was an instance of God's mighty power, so was it no less a mark of his special favor toward our Saviour: as to take away life signifies extremity of displeasure, so to restore it implies the highest degree of favor. Death in itself imports a total incapacity and deprivation of good, and is used to express the worst state of being, or utmost misery, consequent on man's disobedience and God's displeasure: and life, as it is really in its own nature the foundation of perceiving good, so it represents and expresses all the happiness of which we are capable, all the reward promised to obedience: wherefore God raising our Saviour to life, declared thereby his especial love and favor to him, his full approbation and acceptance of him: if yielding him to death might seem to argue God's displeasure toward, or disregard of him; raising him to life doth much more demonstrate a tender affection, an extraordinary care for and respect to him: that might be supposed to proceed on other grounds; this can receive no other interpretation. To give life is the ground of that relation which is the highest in nature, and speaks most

affection; wherefore, in Scripture language, to raise up is termed to beget; and this regeneration is put for the resurrection; and our Saviour, in the mystical speech of the psalmist, expounded by St. Paul, is said that day to be begot, when he was raised by God; so that it being a paternal act doth signify a paternal regard: whence St. Paul farther saith, 'Our Saviour was declared' (or rather determined and defined) 'to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead:' this act of God raising him, not only showing him to be, but in some sort constituting him, the Son of God.

2. Thus doth our Saviour's resurrection aptly serve to dignify and exalt his person in our esteem: it also may confirm our faith in the efficacy of his performances for us: we need not doubt, considering this, of the pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our persons, the sanctification of our hearts, the salvation of our souls, (we, which is always to be supposed and understood, performing the conditions required of us;) I say, the pardon of our sins, and acceptance of our persons; for, 'as he was delivered for our offences, so he was raised again for our justification;' that is, we are thereby assured of our acquittance from sin, and restitution to God's favor; and perhaps somewhat more; our pardon and acceptance seems not only declared, but also consigned and delivered up unto us by our Saviour's resurrection: as we were punished in his suffering, so in his resurrection we were restored; Christ merited our justification by his passion, but God gave it us in his resurrection; being that formal act of grace whereby he was (after having undergone the effects of divine displeasure) apparently reinstated in God's favor, and we virtually in him; 'Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again:' since God hath acknowleged satisfaction done to his justice, by discharging our surety from prison, and all farther prosecution; since he hath in a manner so notorious and signal demonstrated his favor to our proxy, there can be no farther pretence against us, no fear of any displeasure remaining: in our baptism was represented, as the burial of Christ, (we being there in show and mystery

buried with them,) so his resurrection also, in virtue of which we then received the benefits corresponding to that representation; 'Being buried with Christ in baptism,' saith St. Paul, 'in him also we were raised again—and us, being dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of our flesh, he quickened together with him, forgiving us all our sins:' and *συνεζωοποίησε, συνήγειρε, συνεκάθισε*, he co-quickened, co-raised, and co-seated us (if I may so speak) with him in heavenly places.

3. We may also hence with good reason hope for aid sufficient to sanctify our hearts and lives: that he which raised our Saviour from a natural death, both can and will raise us from spiritual death, from that mortal slumber in sins and trespasses, in which we lie buried naturally, to walk in that newness of life, and heavenly conversation, to which the gospel calls us, and the divine Spirit excites us; 'which is that first resurrection, which blessed and holy is he that hath a part in; on such the second death shall have no power:' for also, consequently, our Saviour's resurrection assures to us the salvation of our souls; for by it, as St. Peter tells us, 'God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath regenerated us unto a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved for us in the heavens:' and, 'If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' Thus may our Saviour's resurrection confirm our faith concerning the efficacy of his performances for us.

4. It was also a most strong and proper argument to demonstrate the validity of his promises, and the truth of his doctrine concerning the future state; (a matter most important, and a fundamental ingredient of all religion;) an argument most strong, I say, as demonstrating by palpable instance the possibility of what he promised and taught, exemplifying in himself, what he bade others to expect, that by divine power they should be raised to life: by his doctrine 'he brought life and immortality to light,' (a point so much doubted and disputed of before; so little seen in the darkness of natural reason, so clouded in the uncertainties of common tradition;) but by his resurrection he proved that light to be true and certain; 'He thereby,' as St. Paul expresses it, (Acts xxvi. 23.) 'by the resurrection from the dead, did most effectually, *φῶς καταγγέλλειν*, denounce and

declare light to the people, and to the nations,' (to all men, both Jews and Gentiles.) Infinitely weak and unsatisfactory are all the arguments, which the subtlest speculation could ever produce, to assert the distinction from the body, the separate existence, the continuance of man's soul after death; the providence and justice of God over men here; the dispensations of reward and punishment hereafter, (those great incentives to virtue, and discouragements from vice,) in comparison of this one sensible experience, attesting to and confirming that doctrine which contains those great things; and for the same reason a most proper argument: for though any miracle (plainly and convincingly so) may suffice to confirm any point of doctrine; yet a miracle in the same kind, about the same matter, is more immediately pertinent and efficacious to that purpose. By curing the sick, our Saviour proved that he could remit sins; and that he was Lord of the Sabbath; having authority to dispense with the rigorous observation of positive laws; and in like manner all the miracles he did were in their nature apt to prove the truth of whatever he taught; 'These were writ,' saith St. John, 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;' yet so as to beget persuasion by discourse interceding, and by virtue of a parity in reason: but our Saviour's resurrection did prove the possibility of ours (with all that coheres or is consequent thereto) directly and immediately, with all evidence possible to sense itself: we cannot (considering this) have any pretence to doubt of what he and his Apostles have taught us; that he preceding as 'the firstborn from the dead, as the firstfruits of them that sleep,' as the captain of life, as our forerunner and pattern, we ἐν ἰδίῳ τάγματι, in our due rank and season, as younger sons of the resurrection, as serving under his command and conduct, in resemblance and imitation of him, shall follow: so that, 'if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead doth dwell in us, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us:' 'that if we have been planted together with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also (planted) in the likeness of his resurrection:' 'that as in Adam we died, so in Christ we shall revive; as we have borne the image of the earthly man, we shall also bear the

image of the heavenly:' 'that he who raised our Lord, shall raise us by his power:' 'knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus shall also raise us by Jesus.' Thus is the resurrection of our Saviour able and apt to beget and establish our faith concerning his person, his performances, and his doctrine; and it being in such manner conducible to so high purposes, it was requisite itself should be declared with most clear and full evidence; and that it should be so, God did abundantly provide. I omit the types and mystical representations which did foreshadow it; and the prophetical passages expressing or alluding to it; (having incidently, on other occasions bordering on this point, formerly touched on the principal of them;) and only say that no matter of fact is capable of surer attestation than God did order this to have. He did προχειροτονεῖν (predesign, with an especial care pick out and appoint) witnesses for this purpose; persons in all respects, for their number, for their qualifications, for their circumstances most considerable and credible: not one or two, but very many, ('five hundred,' St. Paul tells us, 'saw him at once;') not strangers, but persons most familiarly acquainted with him, ('who were with him from the beginning, who went out and in with him,' for three years space, from his baptism to his ascension;) not on relation, or at a distance, but by immediate sense and converse with him, ('who did,' as St. Peter, one of them, tells us, 'eat and drink with him after that he rose from the dead;') not from a single, transient experience, but by frequent conversation for a good continuance of time; ἐπὶ πλείους ἡμέρας, for many days together, ('To whom,' saith St. Luke, 'he presented himself living after he had suffered by many certain tokens, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God;') persons of unquestionable discretion and honesty, who preached sincerity to others, (with effectual persuasion,) and in other things irreprovably practised it; who could have no imaginable design in testifying it, beside the discharge of their conscience in God's sight; as encountering thereby the most terrible oppositions and difficulties; incurring most certain and most grievous dangers, troubles, and sufferings; without any possible benefit (of worldly profit, honor, or pleasure) accruing thence to themselves; without any comfort or

support, except the reward they might hope for from God for the performance of so difficult and troublesome a duty: in fine, by persons whose testimony God himself ratified by extraordinary graces (invincible courage, constancy, patience, self-denial, meekness, and charity) conferred on them; by miraculous works openly and frequently performed by them; so that they did effectually 'with great power yield their testimony concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them,' (great appearance of the divine favor toward them, of divine goodness in them,) as we have it, Acts iv. 33. It was the principal part of their office (of the highest apostolical office) to testify this truth; as we see in the choice of Matthias, where it is said, 'Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.' And beyond the providing witnesses so qualified, testimonies so credible, what could God himself do necessary to convince men endued with any competency of reason and ingenuity, or to distinguish them from men of contrary disposition, (unreasonably and unworthily incredulous;) what means, I say, could farther be required, to beget and confirm our faith in the matter of our Saviour's resurrection, and consequently of all doctrines taught by him and his disciples, which by this most signal miracle are so perfectly asserted and proved?

Now the great end and use of our Saviour's resurrection being thus declared, I shall not insist on explaining the nature thereof, (it being clear that his death consisting in the separation of soul and body, each departing to its place, his resurrection, opposed thereto and restoring him into the same state, must consist in resuscitating, reducing, and reuniting them together, so as to recover all vital faculties, and exercise vital operations,) nor in considering the causes efficient thereof, (which it is certain could be no other than that divinity common to the three Persons individed in nature, power, and operation;) whence it is attributed, as most commonly to God, so peculiarly sometimes to the glory and power of the Father, who in order of nature and in all common operations doth precede; sometimes to the Son, 'who laid down his life, and took

it up again,' who demolished the temple of his own body, and reared it up again; sometimes to the Holy Ghost, by which, as he did cast out devils, and performed other his great works, so he did this grand miracle; which dwelling in him, did quicken his mortal body, as is intimated and by consequence arises from the place forecited, Rom. viii. 11. On these things, as also on the manner and circumstances of our Saviour's resurrection, I shall not insist, having not leisure sufficient to consider and prosecute all, but only to touch those things which seem most material and useful.

Yet must I not altogether pass over the circumstance of time, (because mentioned here,) 'On the third day.' This is added, as it is commonly in Scripture when mention is made of our Saviour's resurrection, according to the common manner of speech, in which, when we relate any story or matter of fact, we are wont to adjoin the circumstances, (of time most commonly, many times of place, and sometimes of other respects and adjuncts,) as signs and arguments of the things certainly, and our assurance in affirming it. Fictions usually go naked of circumstances, nor can the relators of them tell when or where or how the matter of them did exist; but when we are punctual in circumstance, it signifies we are serious and confident, and grounded in the thing itself. As for this circumstance itself, that which is most remarkable therein seems to be the wisdom of God choosing a convenient distance of time, after our Saviour's death, for his resurrection; he staid so long that it might be thoroughly certain our Saviour was really dead, beyond all possibility of recovery by natural means; (all natural heat being necessarily extinguished by that durance in the grave, although he had been taken down with some undiscernible remainders thereof from the cross;) he deferred it no longer, both because there was no reason for doing so, and because it was fit that while men's memories were fresh, their passions warm, their fancies busy, their mouths open in discourse concerning his death; while the designed witnesses were present, (both enemies watching and friends attending the event,) it was, I say, then most fitting that our Saviour should arise: as for the meaning of the word third, (whether it be to be taken inclusively in respect to the day of our

Saviour's passion, or so as to exclude it,) with the reconciling of some Scriptures seeming dissonant in the point, I refer you for satisfaction to commentators on the gospel; the question not belonging to the substance of our faith, nor having any very considerable influence (that I see) on practice. I proceed therefore.

He ascended into Heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.

After our Lord had (after his resurrection) consummated what was requisite to be done by him on earth for the confirmation of our faith, and constitution of his church; having a competent time conversed with his disciples, (establishing their faith, enlightening their minds in the knowlege of truth and understanding of the Scriptures, inflaming their affections, comforting their hearts against ensuing tribulations, all oppositions of earth, and hell, for his sake; directing and prescribing to them how they should proceed in their instructing, converting, and reconciling the world to the faith and obedience of his law; furnishing them with commission and authority to testify his truth, to dispense the tenders of grace and pardon procured by him, to collect and build up that church, which he had purchased by his blood, lastly imparting his effectual benediction to them; having, I say, done these things, (which St. Luke expresses altogether by the words *ἐντειλάμενος αὐτοῖς*, that is, having given all necessary instructions, and laid fitting commands on them,) he was in their presence taken, carried up, *ἀνελήφθη, ἀνεφέρετο*,) and ascended into heaven; he, that is, he according to his humanity, his body and soul were by the divine power translated into heaven; into heaven; what is meant by that (in the utmost extent, according to the truth of the thing) appears by other phrases equivalent, by which this action is expressed; 'Ascending to the Father;' that is, to the place of God's more especial presence and residence; where *ἐμφανίζεται τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, he appears to the face of God; 'being exalted to the right hand of God,' (that is, to the place of highest eminency, and of greatest proximity to God;) entering *εἰς τὰ ἅγια*, (into those most holy places,

that ἐπώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, those intimate recesses of inaccessible and incommunicable glory ;) being assumed and entering into glory; passing through the heavens, (that is, all places above, inferior to the highest pitch of glory;) ascending ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, above, beyond all heavens; becoming ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν, (more sublime than, advanced above, the heavens;) by which appears that the utmost term of our Saviour's ascent was that place of all in situation most high, in quality most holy, in dignity most excellent, in glory most august; the inmost sanctuary of God's temple above, not made with hands; the most special presence-chamber in those heavenly courts. Thither did our Saviour ascend; and there (as it follows here) 'he sitteth at God's right hand,' for the ends and uses of these two, (one whereof is only the way or tendency unto the other,) conspiring or being coincident, (I shall join the consideration of them together;) the meaning of which words it is not hard to find out, it being obvious that the state of things above is in Scripture represented to us by that similitude, which is apt most to beget in us reverence towards God, (and which really doth most resemble it;) the state of a king here, sitting on his throne; personages of highest rank and respect, his nearest relations, his most beloved favorites, the chief ministers and officers of his crown attending on him, and surrounding his throne; so yet that for distinction, some place (more eminent and honorable than the rest) is assigned to him, toward whom the King intends to declare especial regard and favor; which place (by custom grounded on reasons plain enough, the opportunity of nearness for all kind of conversation and address; and the right hand's advantage for strength and activity, acquired by use, and consequently also its aptitude to give or take) hath been determined to be the next place at the right hand; (as we see, for instance, when Bathsheba came to Solomon, it is said, 'The king—sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand:') thus our Saviour being raised by God to the supreme pitch of honor, of power, of favor with him, having 'advanced him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins:' having 'superexalted him, and bestowed on him a name above

all names, to which all knees in heaven, in earth, under the earth must bow;' having 'seated him in heavenly places, above all principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and name (or title) that is named, both in the present world and that which is to come;' having 'committed to him all authority in heaven and on the earth; given all things into his hands;' having 'made him heir of all things; subjected all things under his feet, (angels, authorities, and powers,) crowned him with (sovereign) glory and honor;' having given him (what that innumerable host of heaven in the Revelation acknowleges him worthy of, v. 12.) 'power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing,' (that is, all good and excellence possible in the highest degree;) God having, I say, conferred these preeminences of dignity, power, and favor on our Saviour, he is said therefore to have seated him at his right hand, at the right hand of the power, (as it is in the gospels; that is, of the Sovereign and Almighty Potentate;) 'at the right hand of the majesty on high; and at the right hand of the throne of God,' (as it is in the Apostle to the Hebrews.) So much plainly the whole speech imports; and if there be any peculiar emphasis designed in the word sitting, beyond that which is sometimes more simply and generally said, being at God's right hand, here may be farther implied, the firm possession, the durable continuance, the undisturbed rest and quiet of this glorious and happy condition wherein he is instated; as also it doth augment the main sense, sitting being the most honorable posture; and therefore signifying to the utmost that eminency of favor and respect he hath in God's sight; as also, it may denote farther the nature and quality of his preferment; his being constituted to rule and to judge; and therefore expressed as sitting on a throne of majesty, on a tribunal of justice.

So much briefly may serve for the explication of these two points: (for as to the words subjoined, the Father Almighty, whereof the latter is addititious, and not extant in the more ancient forms of this Creed, having considered them before, treating on the beginning of the Creed, and particularly having there taken the word Almighty in its greatest latitude, so as to include both παντοκράτωρ and παντοδύναμος, passing

over the critical distinction made between them; I shall not repeat any thing concerning them.)

Now as to the ends of our Saviour's glorious ascension and abode in heaven, the effects produced thereby, the uses which the belief and consideration thereof may conduce to; the ends and effects thereof, I say, declared in Scripture, are briefly,

1st. That as a Priest and Advocate he might there intercede for us, for the pardon of our sins, for the acceptance of our persons, for the success of our prayers, for the supply of our needs, for the collation of all benefits and blessings on us; representing his merits, pleading our cause, presenting our supplications, and interposing his favor and authority in our behalf: 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us:' 'He is our High-Priest, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens,' there performing that office for us: 'Who shall condemn? It is Christ who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedeth for us' (there:) 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:' 'God exalted him as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.' It is by him that we do προσέρχεσθαι τῷ Θεῷ; have our access to God, not only by virtue of his merits, but by his continual act of mediation: it is he, that in the golden censer, at the golden altar before God, offers up the incense of our prayers, consecrated and perfumed by his hand.

2dly. He ascended and resides in heaven, that as a King he might govern us, protect us, save and deliver us from our enemies; that he might subdue and destroy his and our enemies; the enemies of his kingdom and of our salvation; the world, the flesh, the devil, sin, death, and hell; whatever opposes his glory, his truth, his service, and consequently impedes our salvation, either by open violence or fraudulent practice. God did say unto him, 'Sit thou at my right hand, till I have made thine enemies thy footstool;' and accordingly, 'He must reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet:' no power shall be able to withstand his will and command, who sits at the helm of omnipotent Sovereignty, at that right hand which governs and orders all things. But having before spoken concerning the royal office and lordship of our Saviour, I shall add no more to this purpose.

3dly. Our Saviour tells us himself, 'that he went to heaven to prepare a place for us;' 'to prepare mansions of joy and bliss in God's presence, where is fulness of joy; at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore.' He is our πρόδρομος, our forerunner into heaven, that hath disposed things there for our entertainment and reception; 'It is his will, that where he is, there we should be also; that we might contemplate and partake of his glory.'

4thly. Our Saviour also tells us that it was necessary he should depart hence, that he might send the Divine Spirit, the power from on high, to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort us; 'If I go not away,' saith he, 'the Paraclete will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you:' that is, God in his wisdom hath appointed, (for the exaltation of our Saviour's honor,) that so incomparably excellent a gift should be the reward of his obedience; the consequence of his triumph; the fruit of his intercession; and ornament of his royal estate; a pledge of his princely munificence: it was reserved as a most royal gift, fit to be given at his coronation; his being inaugurated and invested in sovereign dignity, power, and glory: whence it is said, 'The Holy Spirit was not yet,' (understand, was not yet poured forth and bestowed in that manner and measure, as God did intend to do it hereafter,) 'because Jesus was not yet glorified:' it was from Jesus, received into glory, that excellent gift was designed to come, in God's purpose and promise. Add hereto consequently,

5thly. That all good gifts and graces bestowed on the Church in general, and on every member thereof singly, useful for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of Christ's body, do proceed hence; 'To every one of you,' saith St. Paul, 'is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ:' whence he saith, (the psalmist saith, prophesying of our Saviour,) 'Having ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'

6thly. I might add that God thus advanced our Saviour to so high a dignity, to declare the love he bears to piety, righteousness, and obedience, in so highly rewarding and dignifying it; 'For because he was obedient to the death, therefore did God exalt him:' 'For the suffering of death, do we see Jesus

crowned with glory and honor.' The belief, therefore, and consideration of these truths, will serve (briefly) to nourish and increase our faith, to cherish and strengthen our hope, to excite and inflame our devotion, to direct and elevate our affections, to enforce and engage, to encourage and quicken our obedience.

To nourish, I say, and cherish our faith and hope. If the resurrection of our Saviour did beget in us a strong persuasion concerning the truth of, and a lively hope of the good proceeding from, our Saviour's undertaking and doctrine; his ascension declared by the same indubitable testimonies and authorities must needs nourish, augment, and corroborate them. We cannot distrust any promises made by him; we cannot despair of any good from him, (not of relief, succor, supply in our straits, or in our needs; of comfort in our afflictions; of protection in our dangers; of deliverance from our miseries;) from him who is ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the divine power; having all things committed to his authority and disposal. It also serves to excite and inflame our devotions: for having such a Mediator in heaven, so near in God's presence, so much in his favor; such a master of requests: so good a friend at court; such a favorite at hand, to present up, to commend, to farther our petitions; 'We may,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews enjoins us, 'come to the throne of grace with all freedom of speech and boldness, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable aid:' we need not doubt of that promise being fulfilled; 'Whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive:' and what greater incitement can there be to devotion, than the assurance of so good acceptance, of so happy success thereof? The proper influence also of these considerations is to direct and elevate our affections from these inferior, mean, vain, and base things, to the things above; 'Seek the things above,' saith St. Paul, 'where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God:' where Christ our life, our hope, our treasure, our head is, there should our hearts be, thither should our affections tend; there should our πολίτευμα (our business and conversation) be, where the family is to which we relate, and its Master; where the city is, where our final rest and abode should be, ('for we are but strangers and pilgrims, and sojourners,') with its Lord and Governor; where our

country is, the place of all our estate and concerment, and he resides which only can make it good to us. It, lastly, doth engage and encourage us to all kind of obedience, to consider that high reward of eternal glory and happiness which our Saviour hath obtained as a reward of his obedience, and as a pledge of like reward designed to us, if we insist in his footsteps; 'Let us run the race that is set before us,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'looking to the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus; who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set at the right hand of God:' 'I covenant to you,' saith our Saviour, 'a kingdom, as my Father covenanted me a kingdom:' supposing we obey his commandments, we shall obtain a like excellent and happy estate: as we see God hath performed to him, so will also he make good his word to us; 'The word,' saith St. Paul, 'is faithful and assuredly true: if we have died with him, (to lust and sin,) we shall also live with him,' (in joy and glory;) 'if we endure, (in obedience and patience,) we shall also reign with him.' To which blessed kingdom God in his mercy bring us all, through the grace, merits, and intercession of him who with God the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever: to whom be all praise and glory for ever. Amen.

From thence He shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.

THIS is the last of those particular characters whereby the grand object of our faith, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, is described, containing a most eminent office peculiar to him, implying the manner of executing it, and determining the extent thereof: the belief of which is of principal consequence, and in a special manner influential on practice; whether we consider the nature of the office or the quality of the person designed thereto: the office, to judge; the Person, He; Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of man, (he that was born, that died, that performed and suffered so much for us,) he shall judge. 'Shall judge:' there is no consideration, whereof man's mind is capable, more apt to excite men to the performance of duty, to restrain them from offending, and to beget in

them a care and conscience of what they do, than this, that they must sometime hereafter certainly be forced to render an account of their actions; that they must undergo a most strict and severe scrutiny; and shall be dealt with according to the result thereof; so as to be approved and rewarded for their good, condemned and punished for their bad lives; a man considering and being persuaded of this, must necessarily accuse himself of extreme folly and madness, if he do not provide for that account, and order his life in respect thereto. This persuasion, I say, is the sharpest spur imaginable to the doing of good, the strongest curb from doing ill, that could be devised; and therefore all nations in some manner have acknowleged it as a fundamental principle of religion, (men, generally, with a ready inclination, have embraced it as so,) that after this life men shall be brought to a just impartial bar, their actions scanned exactly, their persons doomed accordingly to comfort or pain.

And indeed setting this apart, all other incentives to virtue, and all avocatives from vice, (which common experience or philosophical speculation do afford us,) seem very blunt and faint; do promise small effect: the native beauty and intrinsic worth of virtue, the conveniences flowing from it, the commendation that attends it, its most goodly fruits of health, peace, and tranquillity, comfort and satisfaction of mind; (beside, that they are usually balanced with contrary inconveniences, difficulties, crosses, troubles, and pains;) if they do not extend beyond this transitory life, how can they in reason be very considerable and efficacious to engage men to adhere thereto? how can the worst of present evils accompanying or following vice, its innate deformity and turpitude, the distempers, disturbances, and disgraces springing from or waiting on it, (which also are often tempered with some kinds of pleasure, advantage, and satisfaction,) if no more hereafter is to be feared, be sufficient to deter or discourage men from the pursuit thereof? the danger of death itself (the most extreme punishment which man can inflict, and which our nature doth most abhor) doth not signify much toward the diverting indigent or ambitious or passionate men from the most desperately wicked attempts: it is Tully's observation, and he infers from it the necessity of supposing future punishments, in order to men's restraint from such actions;

Ut aliqua, saith he,* *in vita formido improbis esset posita, apud inferos ejusmodi quædam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse voluerunt, quod videlicet intelligebant his remotis non esse mortem ipsam pertimescendam:* (that in this life there might be some fear on wicked men, those ancients would have some punishments appointed below for impious persons; because, forsooth, they understood that these being set apart, death itself was not much to be feared.) Neither is this persuasion thus only a special instrument of virtue, but the supposal thereof is otherwise a necessary support of all religion, securing the first and main principles thereof, the being of a God and his providence: the belief of a Deity, according to any tolerable notion thereof; of a providence over human affairs, such as might engage and encourage to religious performance, cannot subsist without supporting a future judgment: the objections that assail both, would strike too hard, and pierce too deep, if this shield did not receive and repel them. To see the most innocent and virtuous persons conflict all their days with crosses and hardships, and (as it sometimes happeneth) after all to die miserably, in great pain and ignominy; and again, to observe persons most outrageous in lewdness and injustice, to flourish and rant it out in a long undisturbed course of prosperity, ending their lives fairly and quietly; hath caused some men to doubt whether, hath induced others flatly to disbelieve, that there is a good and a just Governor of the world; and that, not without apparent cause, supposing all accounts to be made up here, no reckoning to remain to be cast up by divine goodness and justice hereafter; then would it in some sort seem true what he said, Θεῶν ὄνειδος τοὺς κακοὺς εὐδαιμονεῖν, (it is a reproach to God, that bad men should be so happy;) then had Diagoras argued probably from an unpunished perjury, that he which suffered himself, and others under his care, to be so abused, did not exist, or did not regard what was done; and Dionysius might have authorised his sacrilege by his prosperous navigation; and with some show might Diogenes say that Harpalus's successful treachery and rapine did *testimonium contra deos dicere*, yield a shrewd testimony against the being and providence of God. But, on the con-

* iv. in Catil.

trary, supposing a judgment to follow, and a proceeding according thereto, all these discourses have no force or moment; God's present connivance, (as it were,) or patient indulgence toward bad men, will argue no more than what becomes him; his excess of goodness in expecting those bad men's return to a better mind, or his wise severity in suffering them to proceed to an inexcusable degree of wickedness, to be strictly inquired into and severely punished hereafter; as neither then doth God's permitting good men to suffer deeply here infer any thing prejudicial to his goodness or justice; since thereby he makes them fitter for, and gives them a surer title to, that reward, which he intends hereafter, after trial and approbation of their virtue, to confer on them. Thus doth this doctrine clear the providence and establish the great attributes of God; therefore doth Christianity most fully and clearly teach, most earnestly and frequently inculcate this point, with all possible advantage, both for the justification of the divine attributes, and the excitation of us to a virtuous and pious life. It tells us that all men's actions are registered in books written with greatest punctuality and exactness, (the books of divine omniscience;) that all persons shall be cited, and presented at the bar, (We must all φανερωθῆναι, be made to appear, παρίστασθαι, be set forth, at the judgment seat of Christ: 'I saw the dead, great and small, standing before God's throne;') that every thought, every word, every work of man shall be disclosed and discussed, with its due quality and desert; ('God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of hearts:' 'Every idle word that men shall speak, thereof they shall render account at the day of judgment:' 'Every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil;') that according to the quality of their doings, thus detected and examined, the merits of each cause weighed, every plea heard, every case considered and tried according to truth. Men shall be acquitted and commended, or declared guilty and condemned; a definitive sentence passing on every one, ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἑκάστῳ, praise (that is, generally, a due taxation and esteem, according to desert) shall be made to every one by the righteous Judge. That this sentence doth include a gracious re-

ward and a just punishment assigned respectively; everlasting glory and joy to them which have done well, endless shame and sorrow to them who have done ill; which shall be infallibly executed: (for, 'God will render to every man according to his works'—'To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil—but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good;' so St. Paul in the second to the Romans: 'We must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, ἵνα κομισήται ἕκαστος, that every one may bear according to the things done in the body, whether good or evil.') That all this shall be performed in a most public and solemn manner, in open court, in the face of all the world, before angels and men; to the conviction and satisfaction of all; so that the consciences of all concerned shall be forced to acquiesce in their doom, as most just and equal; and all shall confess, and say with them in the Revelation, 'Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, be to the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his ways:' 'Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints.'

Thus (and much more fully than time will permit me to relate) doth our religion and holy Scripture set out that judgment, which all men hereafter must undergo; wherein the wonderful clemency of God shall be demonstrated; wherein his exact justice shall be declared; wherein the knotty mysteries of his providence shall be unfolded; wherein his honor (that seems now to suffer so much) shall be fully repaired and vindicated: wherein all scores, that now run on, shall be quitted and made even. Such, I say, shall the judgment itself be; the consideration of which, if it make no impression on our hearts, if it beget no dread within us, if it do not render us somewhat wary and watchful over our doings, what means can be imagined able? what method apt to do it? what a desperate hardness and insensibility do we lie under! how deplorably blind and stupid are we! more stupid than Felix, who, hearing St. Paul discourse of judgment to come, could not

forbear trembling; more blind and senseless than those obstinate sons of darkness, the devils themselves, who believe and tremble.

But passing the judgment, let us (which should more still engage us, and may work farther on us to the same purpose) consider the Judge: 'He shall come to judge;' He: 'He that came once in our nature,' (with wonderful condescension of grace and charity,) 'to free us from sin and misery;' he that suffered so deeply for us; he that died to redeem us; he shall come to judge. The original and absolute right or power of judging appertains to God, whose creatures, whose subjects, whose servants we are naturally; as he is the Sovereign Lord and King, so is he the Judge of all; as we owe obedience to the laws he hath prescribed us, performance of the service he hath allotted us, improvement of the talents he hath committed to us; so we stand bound to render account to him of the due performance in those respects, and obnoxious to the judgment he shall make thereof. All judgment therefore must be exercised either immediately by God himself, or in subordination to him; in his name and right, by virtue of authority and power derived from him: and it (for the honor of his Son, for the comfort of us) hath he delegated and committed to Jesus our Saviour: not immediately by himself, but by his Son he hath determined to judge the world; 'The Father judgeth no man,' (saith our Saviour himself,) 'but hath committed all judgment to the Son:' and, 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained:' and, saith St. Peter, 'God hath commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead:' and, 'It is the judgment-seat of Christ, before which we must all appear.' In fine, 'The Father,' saith our Saviour, 'hath given to the Son authority, to execute judgment,' for that he is the Son of man; (hath committed to him authority regal and judicial; for that he is that Son of man, whom God hath designed to this office, even of old, as we see in Daniel vii. 13. 14. and in Isaiah ix. 6. 7.)

It is plain then that our Saviour is by designment and deputation from God invested with this great office and power.

And why God so appointed him many reasons may be assigned; on many accounts our Saviour's person may appear most fit for this grand employment. How could God more plainly show his goodness in this matter, than by constituting such a Judge? Seeing that judgment should pass on us, it was necessary and requisite; how could the terror and severity thereof be better tempered, than by putting the execution thereof into such hands? whom, were the choice permitted to us, should we rather submit to, than to him who is by nature our brother; who in disposition is meek and lowly, compassionate and merciful; who by so many signal experiments hath expressed such an excess of kindness and charity toward us; who hath so conspicuously evidenced himself to be the best friend of mankind; that he ardently desires the salvation of all men, even of his worst enemies; whom he spent his blood for, whom he prayed for, dying; whom he continually invites to reconciliation and repentance? How also could God better declare his justice, than in exalting him to this pitch, who out of obedience and compliance with his will descended so low, and underwent so much? Who better deserved a crown, who more righteously would manage a sceptre, than he who willingly bore a cross, who patiently submitted to a scourge? It was also equal and fit that he who was unworthily rejected and despised, cruelly abused and persecuted, unjustly accused, condemned, and slaughtered by men, should be requited with power to right himself on them; to reprobate them worthily who had unworthily rejected him; to judge them justly, who had wickedly condemned him; to punish them severely, who had unmercifully afflicted him; that he should see his proud and spiteful enemies lying under his feet, at his discretion.

Add hereto the wisdom of God in designing him to be judge, whom they who were to be judged might see and hear, and converse with; whom the godly with cheerful satisfaction and comfort, the wicked with befitting terror and astonishment, might behold; they with unexpressible joy hear him commending, acquitting, and blessing them; those with dismal amazement and regret hear him pronouncing the fatal sentence and curse on them; they with humble thankfulness acknowlege his grace, those with confusion confess their guilt; 'Behold,' saith

St. John in the Revelation, (i. 7.) 'he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, even they who did pierce him.' The dreadful presence of God were neither discernible nor supportable by guilty men: 'Who may stand in his sight when once he is angry?'

1. Who could endure to hear that 'voice, at which the earth melteth;' that 'reproof, at which the pillars of heaven tremble;' that majesty, in presence whereof the purest seraphims are constrained to hide their faces? how should impure men abide that face which no man can behold and live? But the milder, though glorious and bright aspect of the Son of man, all men, in some manner, may be capable to see; and if we believe St. Austin, *Rectum erat ut judicandi viderent judicem;* It was fit that they who were to be judged should see their Judge.

So much reason there was, (and more questionless, beyond what we can know or comprehend,) that our Saviour Jesus should be designed and deputed to this office; in it we may admire the wisdom and adore the justice of God; for it we may applaud his goodness and clemency.

We may also (that this doctrine may have the greater impression on our hearts and influence on our practice) farther consider how great an aggravation it will seem to our whether foolish perverseness or slothful negligence; what extreme disingenuity, how wretched ingratitude it will argue in us, to be cast and condemned by such a Judge; a Judge so just and equal, so mild and gentle, so benign and favorable to us! With what face, we having transgressed his most good and righteous laws; having violated our manifold obligations and engagements toward him; having abused his so great love and good-will toward us; having rejected his gracious tenders of mercy and favor; defeated his most serious purposes, frustrated his most earnest endeavors for our good; having so forfeited all his favor, and incurred his most grievous displeasure, shall we appear in his presence? how shall we bear the frowns of so dear love changed into fierce disdain, of highest patience turned into extreme fury, of so great majesty provoked by such affronts? With what heart shall we be able to hear that voice, which did once so sweetly and affectionately sound words of peace and comfort in our ears; that so kindly invited us to

peace, so meekly entreated us to compliance, now uttering only bitter complaints and rebukes, thundering forth words of indignation and terror, denouncing horrible threats and curses on us? But let this suffice for the nature of the office and act of judging, and for the Person exercising it. Here is farther implied,

2. The manner of its exercise, or execution; or rather the manner of his address and proceeding thereto, ('From thence he shall come;') the which we have in Scripture (for begetting answerable veneration, regard, and awe within us) described to be with greatest solemnity, glory, and magnificence. He came once in a meek humility to teach us our duty, but he shall come again with a terrible majesty to exact an account thereof; taking his progress from the highest heavens, in a most royal state, attended on with a numerous, (or rather an innumerable πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι, all his holy angels: it is Matt. xxv. 31. 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and his holy angels with him;' that is, an innumerable company, as we read it Heb. xiii. 22.) an innumerably numerous and pompous train of glorious angels, accompanied with triumphant shouts and acclamations; a trumpet (blown by the mouth of an archangel sounding before him an universal summons, with a noise so loud and piercing, as shall immediately, and in the twinkling of an eye, shake all the earth, and rouse the dead out of their mortal slumber. 'This same Jesus,' said the angels to the Apostles, expressing the thing in a more plain and simple manner, 'which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;' (a cloud took him up from their eyes; the clouds should restore him to sight; for, 'Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him,' saith St. John:) and, 'They shall see the Son of man,' himself tells us, 'coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory:' and, 'The Lord himself,' saith St. Paul, 'shall descend from heaven,' ἐν κελεύσματι, (with a shout; with an exciting summons,) 'with the voice of an archangel, with the trump of God:' 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render to every man according to his practice:' 'When the Son of man shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.'

So the Scriptures (to the purpose forementioned, to beget respect and dread in us) declare that our Saviour shall come at the end of the world, at the day of judgment, and how.

Here is farther determined the extent of this judgment: he shall come to judge; whom? how many? All, without exception; expressed by the words quick and dead: which expression is taken from those words of St. Peter, (Acts x. 42.) wherein our Saviour is said to be designed by God, κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν, 'the judge of the living and the dead;' or of St. Paul, (2 Tim. iv. 1.) 'I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom:' or those of St. Peter again, (1 Ephes. iv. 5.) 'Who shall render an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead;' add a like place; (Rom. xiv. 9.) 'That he may be Lord both of the dead and living:' these places evidently confirming the truth of the proposition, yet so that the meaning thereof hath remained somewhat dubious, and that themselves have seemed to need explication: for it being a common law, to which all men by nature, by desert, by divine appointment, are subject, to undergo death, (for, 'What man is he that shall not see death?' 'It is appointed for men once to die, and after death judgment,') why should not the dead comprehend all that are to be judged? as we see it expressed in the Revelation: 'I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God—and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works.' The dead were judged; no mention is made of the living: wherefore some have interpreted the dead and living, not for a distinction of person, but of parts in men: the living souls and dead bodies of men: others have taken them metaphorically: 'the living,' (that is, righteous men, men endued with a spiritual life;) 'the dead,' (that is, men 'dead in trespasses and sins,' void of spiritual sense and activity.) But the difficulty mentioned is not so strong as to force us on so remote and absonous expositions: St. Paul hath evidently enough showed us how to understand the words, and how to solve the knot propounded; that by the living are to be understood those who shall be found (and as it were surprised) alive when our Saviour comes; by the dead, all others, who before that time

had died, and shall be raised at the sound of the last trump; 'This we say to you,' saith he to the Thessalonians, 'in the word of the Lord,' (or as the word of the Lord,) 'that we which live, remaining at the presence of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.' Our Lord, therefore, shall find some alive when he comes; therefore what is said of all men's being appointed to taste death, is to be understood with this exception; all but those whose death shall be prevented by our Lord's coming, (which is set out as sudden and unexpected, like the coming of a thief in the night.) Neither are those persons so exempted from death, but that they must undergo that which is equivalent thereto; a change which shall render them alike prepared for judgment with them who have died; 'Behold,' saith St. Paul again to the Corinthians, 'I tell you a mystery: We shall not indeed all fall asleep, (or not all die,) but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye:' which words with sufficient evidence declare the meaning of the expression here. The sum is, that all men, none excepted, of what condition or quality, what nation or time, what age soever, shall be judged; high and low, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, good and bad: the mightiest princes and lords, as well as the meanest subjects and slaves; the deepest scholars, as well as the simplest idiots: in a word, all men whatever, without any exception, without any acceptance of persons, must appear before this Judge, must undergo this trial and sentence.

Thus shall he come to judge both quick and dead: than the belief of which point there is none more necessary, than the consideration of which none more profitable; necessary and profitable in many respects.

1. The faith and regard thereof will preserve us from disbelieving, from being offended with, from repining at the providence of God; from being dissatisfied with his proceeding and dispensations here either toward ourselves or others.

2. It may also keep us from rash censure, and invading our Lord's office: 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant; to his own master he stands or falls:' 'Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ:' 'There is

one lawgiver, who can save or destroy; who art thou that judgest another?' 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who shall enlighten the hidden things of darkness, and manifest the counsels of hearts.'

3. It may support and comfort us against all unjust and uncharitable censures, groundless surmises and slanders, undeserved scorns and reproaches of men; for that assuredly at that judgment right shall be done thee; thy innocence shall be cleared, thy honor vindicated and repaired: 'God shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgments as the noonday:' so that approving thy conscience to God, thou mayest say with St. Paul, 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.'

4. It is the most powerful and effectual means possible to beget sincerity in us; to render us circumspect; to stir us up to diligence in all our conversation, in our thoughts, words, and actions: for since the most inward recesses of our hearts must be searched out, our most secret designs and desires must be brought to light, what profit will it be to dissemble, to disguise, to conceal our thoughts? Since we must render an account of every thought that riseth in our minds, (at least which is entertained there,) of every word that passeth through our mouth, of every action we undertake, what reason have we,

5. With more attentive and accurate regard to consider and mind what we do? Since it is certain we shall be judged, but uncertain when we shall be called thereto, how watchful are we concerned to be, how observant of our Saviour's admonition; 'Watch, for ye do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh!' 'If thou dost not watch, I shall come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I shall come on thee.' It may be (for all we know) the next day, the next hour, when death shall call us to that prison, where we shall be detained until the time of our being presented at the bar; and what a misery will it be to be surprised, to be found unprepared, unable to render a good account! 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?'

6. No persuasion, no consideration doth promise such efficacy towards the rousing of our passions, or duly ordering and employing them on religious practice; especially it sets on work those two great engines and mighty springs of action, fear and hope. How can we believe and think of this point without being possessed with a hideous fear of abiding so strict a trial, of falling under so heavy a condemnation, (if we are sensible of having been very faulty or negligent in performance of our duty;) without a very comfortable hope of coming well off, of finding favor and mercy in that day, of being happily rewarded, if we are conscious to ourselves of having endeavored seriously and carefully to please God, and obey his commandments? if we can in our hearts say with St. Paul, 'I have combated the good combat, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith;' we may also say confidently with him, 'From henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which in that day the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall render unto me:' if, 'by virtue of the grace of God, which appeared to all men,' and according to its instruction, we have 'denied ungodliness, worldly lusts,' and 'lived soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world,' we may joyfully expect 'the blessed hope and appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

I conclude, exhorting and wishing that the meditation of this most important business may be continually present to our minds; that we may seem (with that devout man) always to hear the last trumpet sounding in our ears, and piercing into our hearts; that so with a pious awe and a well-grounded hope we may 'expect the coming of our Lord, and love his appearance;' that being hence restrained from all impious and vicious conversation, being moved to a watchful and circumspect pursuit of all virtue and piety, guiding our lives inoffensively in all good conscience toward God and man, we may be able to render a good account, and with comfort unexpressible hear those happy sentences; 'Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy;' 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Unto the possession whereof, God in his mercy bring us, by the merits of our Saviour, in obedience to our Lord, according to

the grace and mercy of our most righteous Judge, Jesus; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever, be all praise and glory. Amen.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

THE whole Creed (as was sometime formerly observed) being probably built on, and seeming no other than an enlargement or dilatation of that faith and confession required at baptism in the blessed Trinity; having surveyed the two former parts concerning the two first Persons, God the Father, and God the Son; we are now come to the third great branch thereof, wherein we profess our belief in the Holy Spirit of God; which is in order the third grand object of our faith: whereof seeing there is here only a simple mention (as it were) made, without any description, any characters thereof expressed, (such as in this Creed are assigned to the other Persons; such as in the Constantinopolitan, and other Creeds after it, are attributed to this,) we must endeavor in some manner to supply that omission, by considering, 1. The *quid;* 2. The *quale*, thereof: first, I say, What is its nature? 2. What peculiar characters, offices, and operation (according to that mystical economy revealed in the gospel) are attributed and appertain thereto?

As for the first, the nature thereof, or what it is; we may observe that the word spirit, (which primitively and properly signifies wind, or breath,) because the wind is a being not immediately exposed to sense, yet of great mobility and force, discovering itself to be so by many great and conspicuous effects, is therefore translated to denote those excellent intellectual beings, which, by reason of their more pure and subtle nature, being otherwise indiscernible to sense, do yet by manifest operations discover their existence and great activity, are called spirits:* such as are in the first place God Almighty, (who invisibly pervades and penetrates and actuates all things, and is therefore by even Virgil himself, according to Lactantius and Macrobius's judgment, styled spirit,) and next the angels, and then the souls of men. Of these beings there is one, mentioned through the Scripture, called the Holy Spirit, the

* Lact. i. 5.

Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the eternal Spirit; and sometimes simply by way of excellency, the Spirit: the nature of which Spirit we may best understand, by considering that the holy Scripture doth attribute and ascribe to him, 1. Divine properties and perfections, communicably peculiar to God. 2. Divine works and operations. 3. Divine appellations and titles. 4. A coordination in dignity; a participation of divine honor and worship. 5. An essential union with God the Father and God the Son; together with, 6. A personal and relative distinction from them. Also, 7. A derivation of Being from the two first Persons, with an intimate relation unto them springing thence. From the declaration and proof of which particulars, will plainly follow those doctrines, which we are bound to believe, against those, who have presumed to contradict and oppugn either the personality or the divinity of the Holy Ghost, or his procession from the Father and the Son. Briefly therefore, I say,

1. The Scripture ascribes to the Holy Ghost the divine properties and perfections; the very word holy (so absolutely and specially, and characteristically attributed to him) seems itself to import so much: for, (as it is in Hannah's prayer,) 'there is none holy as the Lord, there is none beside him;' none absolutely, perfectly holy, but God: (holy; that is, by nature exalted and separated from all other things at a distance unapproachable, peculiarly venerable and august:) whence the Holy One is a name and distinguishing attribute of God. The name spirit, simply put, may seem also to imply the same: denoting highest purity and actuality. But we have farther the perfections of eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence (the most high perfections, and proper to God) attributed to him. Eternity; for he is expressly called αἰώνιον Πνεῦμα; 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God.' Omnipresence; 'Whither,' saith David, 'shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?' The question imports a negation, and a reason thereof: there is no flying from God's Spirit, for that it is everywhere. Omniscience; 'The Spirit searcheth all things,' (that is, perfectly to the bottom understands all things,) 'even the depths of God;' the things of God, which to know is as far above a creature, as for

one man to know the thoughts, inclinations, and affections of another man; (such an argument St. Paul insinuates.) Particularly prescience, the knowlege of future events, (which is the highest and hardest kind of knowlege, and immediately proper to God, and therefore called *divination*,) is in a special manner every where appropriated to the Spirit, as the immediate fountain thereof; whence he is called the prophetical Spirit. To which we may add, independency of will and action; 'For,' as St. Paul speaks, 'all these things' (the production of all those excellent graces, the distribution of all those admirable gifts) 'doth the one and the same Spirit work, dividing to every one as he pleaseth:' *Ubi vult spirat;* 'The Spirit blows where he pleaseth,' doth every where what he will. Absolute goodness; 'Thy Spirit is good,' saith David; 'lead me into the land of uprightness.' Perfect veracity, implied by the abstract word, truth; 'It is the Spirit,' saith St. John, 'that witnesseth, for the Spirit is truth;' truth itself, the highest, most perfect truth.

2. Lastly, omnipotence; demonstrated by those works which are said to be done by him; which are the greatest and hardest possible: such as creation; a working of miracles; revelation of future events; vivification; renovation of men's minds; justification, and the like; which, both according to the nature of the thing and in Scripture-account, do require a power no less than infinite and most divine to effect them: the places are frequent and obvious, which ascribe such works to the Holy Spirit; I cannot stand to recite them.

3. To the Holy Ghost are also assigned the divine names and titles, Jehovah, Lord, God, and those consequently which go along with them. For often, and on divers occasions, the same things are said to be done by God, or to God, and by, or to the Spirit; one word interpreting, or concurring in signification with the other, by reason of that real identity which belongs to the things signified by them. It is said of the distrustful and disobedient Israelites in the Psalms, 'That they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel;' that 'they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:' which is expressed thus by the Prophet Isaiah; 'They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.' St. Peter, in the

Acts, chargeth Ananias of having 'lied to the Holy Spirit,' and having 'lied to God;' 'Why,' saith he, 'Ananias, hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto (or cozen) the Holy Spirit? thou hast not lied unto men, but to God:' questionless by both those expressions designing the same thing, and implying the Holy Ghost to be God. Our Saviour is said to be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and therefore to be called the Son of God: he is said to perform miracles sometimes by the power of God, sometimes by the power of the Holy Ghost; 'If I,' saith St. Matthew, 'by the Holy Spirit cast out devils:' 'If I by the finger of God cast them out,' saith St. Luke. And it is ordinary for what is sometimes called the Word of God, to be otherwhile called the Word of the Spirit; proceeding from the same understanding, being dictated by the same operation. We are also said to be θεοδίδακτοι, taught of God, in respect to the instruction and guidance received from him: in fine, every good Christian is said to be a temple; a temple of God: because 'the Spirit of God dwells in him.'

4. A coordinate dignity; a parity of honor and worship with God the Father and God the Son is ascribed to the Holy Spirit: this appears signally in our Saviour's institution of baptism to be administered in the joint names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whereby we are initiated into the like faith and acknowlegement; are obliged to the same worship and obedience of all three Persons. The same appears by that benediction of St. Paul, imploring on the Corinthians the divine favor and assistance, according to that mystical economy which the gospel exhibits; 'The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God,' (that is, of God the Father,) 'and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.' As also from that place of St. Paul: 'By Christ we have access in one Spirit to the Father:' he having an equal share with God our Saviour in the gospel dispensation of grace and salvation unto men. We also have the same coordination clearly supposed in 1 Cor. xii. 4. 5. 6. 'There are,' saith St. Paul, 'divisions of favors, but the same Spirit: and there are divisions of ministries, but the same Lord;' (that is, the same Christ:) 'and there are divisions of operations, but the same God,' or Father: (all the gracious gifts of the gospel are bestowed; all the sacred

ministries are managed; all the wonderful performances are brought to pass, by the joint and equal conduct and cooperation of these three divine Persons.) And that sovereign regard our Saviour hath declared due to the honor and authority of the Holy Ghost, insomuch that blasphemy against him is a sin peculiarly irremissible, argues his divinity; since neither, according to the reason of the thing, could offending against the fame of a creature be capable of such aggravations; nor could God in a manner prefer the honor of a creature before his own.

5. That there is an essential union between the Holy Ghost and the other divine Persons, is both by evident consequence deducible from, and is immediately asserted in Scripture. For that there is but one God, is there continually taught and inculcated on us; and how it calls the Holy Ghost, we have seen; therefore necessarily the Holy Ghost doth partake of that one divine essence. Also, that the Holy Ghost is God, is inferred from that comparison of St. Paul between the spirit of man in respect to man, and the Spirit of God in respect to God; as the spirit of man is intrinsecal to man, so the Spirit of God is to him: and by reason of the perfect simplicity of the divine nature, that which subsists in God must necessarily be God. In fine, St. John expressly tells us, 'That there are three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one:' they are one, and yet,

6. There is a personal distinction of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son: for they are three; three Persons: for that not only distinct names, but peculiar operations are assigned to them; which should not be done without good reason, if there were no personal distinction: that which also appears from his being said to proceed from the Father, and to be sent from him; from his being an advocate and interceding with the Father; his crying within us, Abba, Father, our having access in him to the Father: as also, his being sent by the Son; his glorifying him; receiving of his; his not speaking from himself: which expressions plainly argue a personal distinction. As do also our Saviour's birth by him,

his performing miracles by him; in a word, God's executing all his purposes of grace and power by him.

7. Lastly, That the Holy Spirit doth derive the common divine essence from the Father and the Son is thence sufficiently apparent, for that he is called the Spirit of the Father, and also the Spirit of the Son: the Spirit of the Father, because he doth ἐκπορεύεσθαι, in a manner incomprehensible doth proceed and emanate from the Father; is of him, is sent by him: for the same reason is he the Spirit of the Son; wherefore he is also expressly said to be sent by the Son.

From these truths thus briefly declared doth follow that the Holy Ghost is one of the divine Persons, in order the third, partaking of the divine nature, and receiving it by communication from the Father and the Son: which is all we intended to show concerning his nature. I proceed to consider the peculiar characters, offices, and operations of the Holy Spirit. There be many particular functions and operations in a special manner attributed and appropriated to the Holy Spirit; which, as they respect God, seem reducible to two general ones, the declaration of God's mind, and the execution of his will; as they respect man, (for in regard to other beings the Scripture doth not so much consider what he performs, as not so much concerning us to know,) the producing in us all qualities and dispositions, the guiding and aiding us in all actions requisite or conducible to our eternal happiness and salvation, doth in a manner comprise them.

1. I say, the declaration of God's mind: whence he is called the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of revelation; for that all supernatural light and instruction hath ever proceeded from him: he instructed all the prophets that have been since the world began to know, he enabled them to speak, the mind of God concerning things present and future: holy men (that have taught men their duty, and led them in the way to happiness) were but his instruments, and 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' by his inspiration the holy Scriptures (the most full and certain witnesses of God's mind) were conceived: he guided the Apostles into all truth: and by them instructed all the world in the knowlege of God's

gracious intentions toward mankind and the holy mysteries of the gospel. All the knowlege we can pretend to in these things doth proceed from his revelation, doth rely on his authority.

2. The execution of God's will. Whence he is called the power of God, (the substantial power and virtue of God,) and the hand of God; and whatever God hath designed, he is said to perform by him. 'By him he framed the world:' he 'garnished the heavens,' as Job speaketh. By him he governs the world; all extraordinary works of providence, (when God beside the common law and usual course of nature interposeth,) all miraculous performances, being attributed to his energy; but especially by him (that which next is to be considered) he manages that work, by divine goodness so earnestly designed, of man's salvation: which he doth,

3. By working in us good dispositions and qualities; by guiding and aiding us in our actions. We are naturally void of those good dispositions of understanding, of will, of affection, which are necessary to make us anywise acceptable to God, fit to serve and please him, capable of any favor from him, of any true happiness in ourselves; our minds, I say, are blind and stupid, ignorant and prone to error, especially in things supernatural and abstracted from ordinary sense; our wills stubborn and froward, vain and unstable, inclining to evil, and averse from what is most truly good; our affections very irregular and unsettled: to remove with bad dispositions, (inconsistent with God's friendship and favor, tending to misery,) and to beget those contrary to them, the knowlege and belief of divine truth, a love of, and willing compliance with goodness; a well-composed, orderly, and steady frame of spirit, God in mercy hath appointed the Holy Spirit; who first opening our hearts, so as to let in and apprehend the light of divine truth propounded to us; then by representation of proper arguments persuading us to embrace it, begets divine knowlege and faith in our minds, (which is the work of illumination and instruction, the first part of this office;) then by continual impressions bends our inclinations, and mollifies our hearts, and subdues our affections to a willing compliance with, a cheerful complacence in, that which is good and pleasing to God; so begetting

all pious and virtuous inclinations in us, reverence to God, charity to men, sobriety and purity, and the rest of those amiable and heavenly virtues, (which is the work of sanctification, another great part of his office:) both which together (illumination of our mind, sanctification of our will and affections) do constitute that work, which is styled the regeneration, renovation, vivification, new creation, resurrection; putting off the old, putting on the new man; of a man; the faculties of our souls being so much changed, and we made, as it were, other men thereby; able and apt to do that to which before we were altogether indisposed and unfit. Neither only doth he alter and constitute our dispositions, but he directs and governs our actions; leading and moving us in the ways of obedience to God's will and law. As we live by him, (have a new spiritual life implanted in us,) so we walk by him, by his continual guidance and assistance. He reclaims us from sin and error; supports and strengthens us in temptation; advises, excites, encourages us to works of virtue and piety: particularly he guides and quickens us in devotion, showing us what we should ask, raising in us holy desires and comfortable hopes thereof, disposing us to approach unto God with fit dispositions of love, and reverence, and humble confidence.

It is also a notable part of the Holy Spirit's office to comfort and sustain us, as in all our religious practice, so particularly in our doubts, difficulties, distresses, and afflictions; to beget joy, peace, and satisfaction in us, in all our doings and all our sufferings: whence he hath the title of Comforter.

It is also a great part thereof to assure us of God's love and favor; that we are his children; and to confirm us in the hopes of our everlasting inheritance. We feeling ourselves to live by him, to love God and goodness, to desire and delight in pleasing God, are thereby raised to hope God loves and favors us; and that he, having by so authentic a seal ratified his word and promise; having already bestowed so sure a pledge, so precious an earnest, so plentiful first-fruits, will not fail to make good the remainder designed and promised us, of everlasting joy and bliss.

Lastly, The Holy Ghost doth intercede for us with God; is our advocate and assistant in the presenting our supplications,

and procuring our good: he cries in us; he pleads for us to God: whence he is peculiarly called Παράκλητος; that is, one who is called in by his good word or countenance to aid him whose cause is to be examined, or whose petition is to be considered.

To which things I may add, that the Holy Ghost is designed to be, as it were, the soul, which informs, enlivens, and actuates the whole body of the Church; connecting and containing together the members thereof in spiritual union, life, and motion; especially quickening and moving the principal members (the governors and pastors) thereof; constituting them in their function, qualifying them for the discharge thereof, guiding and assisting them therein.

Such is the office, such the operations of the Holy Ghost; the which we should more distinctly and fully consider, if the time and nature of this exercise would give leave.

The use of these doctrines (the influence the belief and consideration of this article should have on our practice) is briefly, 1. To oblige us to render all due honor and adoration to the divine majesty of the blessed Spirit. 2. To work in us an humble affection and a devout thankfulness to God for so inestimable a favor conferred on us, such as is the presence and inhabitation, the counsel, conduct, and assistance of God's Holy Spirit in us: him we must acknowlege the author of our spiritual life, of all good dispositions in us, of all good works performed by us, of all happiness obtainable by us: to him we must render all thanks and praise. Therefore, 3. To excite us to desire earnestly and pray for God's Spirit, the fountain of such excellent benefits, such graces, such gifts, such privileges, such joys, and blessings unexpressible: if we heartily invite him, if we fervently pray for him, he will certainly come; so hath our Saviour promised, 'that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them which ask him.' 4. We should endeavor to demean ourselves well toward the Holy Spirit; yielding to that heavenly guest, vouchsafing to come unto us, a ready entrance and kind welcome into our hearts; entertaining him with all possible respect and observance; hearkening attentively to his holy suggestions, and carefully obeying them; not quenching the divine light or devout heat he kindles in us;

not resisting his kindly motions and persuasions; not grieving or vexing him; that so with satisfaction he may continue and abide with us, to our infinite benefit and comfort; it should engage us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may be fit temples for so holy and pure a Spirit to dwell in, lest he loathe and forsake us. 5. It is matter of comfort and encouragement (exceedingly useful and necessary for us) to consider that we have such a guide and assistant in our religious practice and spiritual warfare. If our lusts be strong, our temptations great, our enemies mighty, we need not be disheartened, having this all-wise and all-mighty friend to advise and help us: his grace is sufficient for us, against all the strengths of hell, flesh, and the world. Let our duty be never so hard, and our natural force never so weak, we shall be able to do all things by him that strengtheneth us; if we will but faithfully apply ourselves to him for his aid, we cannot fail of good success.

The Holy Catholic Church.

THE Holy Catholic Church: in the more ancient forms it ran only, Holy Church, (the word Catholic being left out;) and in some of them it had not the same position as now, being put in the last place: and it seems in the most ancient symbols the Church was not propounded as an object of faith directly and immediately, but was mentioned obliquely, on occasion of remission of sins ministered by it, of eternal life obtained in it: as we may reasonably deem from that notable place in St. Cyprian;* *Nam cum dicunt*, (when they profess in the symbol at baptism,) *credis remissionem peccatorum et vitam æternam per Ecclesiam:* to which kind of expression that place in Tertull. de Baptismo† seems to allude, *Cum sub tribus et testatio fidei, et sponsio salutis pignorentur, necessario adjicitur Ecclesiæ mentio.* And if we consult the most ancient summaries of faith extant in Irenæus and Tertullian,‡ and composed by them, questionless according to the general sense of their times, we

* Epist. ad Magnum. † Cap. vi. ‡ Vid. lib. de Symbolo ad Catechumenos.

shall not find this article propounded; not even in the Nicene Creed itself. * It is therefore most unprobable that this article (either in substance, or at least according to this manner of proposal and expression) is of a later standing than the rest; being introduced (as is likely) on occasion of those many heresies and schisms, which continually sprang up, to secure the truth of Christian doctrine, the authority of ecclesiastical discipline, the peace and unity of the Church, by obliging men to profess their disclaiming any consent or conspiracy with those erroneous and contentious people, (who had devised new, destructive, or dangerous conceits against the general consent of Christians, and drove on factions contrary to the common order and peace of the Church;) to profess, I say, their disclaiming such heretical principles and factious proceedings; and their constant adherence to the doctrines generally embraced by the churches founded and instructed by the Apostles; as also their persistance in concord and communion with them; their readiness to observe the received customs and practices derived by them from apostolical institution; their submission to the laws and disciplines established in them by lawful authority. This I conceive to have been the meaning of them who first inserted this article, of believing the Holy Church, into the Creed: 'I believe;' that is, I adhere unto, (for as we did at first observe, belief here is to be understood as the nature of the matter should require,) I adhere unto, or am persuaded that I ought to adhere unto, that body of Christians, which, diffused over the world, retains the faith taught, the discipline settled, the practices appointed by our Lord and his Apostles.

And that men should be obliged to do thus, there was ground both in the reason of the thing and in Scripture. In reason, there being no more proper or effectual argument to assure us that any doctrine is true, or practice warrantable, to convince sectaries deviating from truth or duty, than the consent of all churches, of whom (being so distant in place, language, humor, custom) it is not imaginable that they should soon or easily conspire in forsaking the doctrines inculcated by the Apostles, or the practices instituted by them: which argu-

* Theodoret. i. 12. hist.

ment pressed by Tertullian, Irenæus, and other ancient defenders of Christian truth and peace, may well, as in matters of this kind, go for a demonstration: and that sentence of Tertullian may well pass for a certain principle and axiom; *Quod apud multos unum invenitur, non est erratum, sed traditum.**

And for Scripture, as it foretels that pernicious heresies should be introduced; that 'many false prophets should arise, and seduce many;' that 'grievous wolves should come in, not sparing the flock;' and 'men should arise, speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them;' as they warn us to take heed of such men, to reject and refuse heretics, to 'mark those which make divisions and scandals' beside the doctrine which Christians had learnt, and 'to decline from them;' to stand off (ἀφιστάναι) from such men as do ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, teach things different from apostolical doctrine, and 'do not consent to wholesome words, (the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,) and the doctrine according to godliness;' as it teacheth us that heresies and factions are works of the flesh, [proceeding from pride and ambition; self-interest and covetousness; peevish and perverse humor; blindness and vanity; rashness and instability; dotage, distemper, and corruption of mind; deceit, cozenage, craft, and hypocrisy; want of good conscience and reverence to God;] so it also describes the universality of them who stick to the truth, and observe the law of Christ; are disposed to charity and peace 'with all those who call on our Lord with a pure mind;' (that is, with all sincere Christians;) to be one body, knit together and compacted of parts affording mutual aid and supply to its nourishment; and joined to, deriving sense and motion from, one Head; and informed by one Spirit; as one house, 'built on the foundation of prophets and Apostles, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building is fitly framed and connected;' as one nation or people, subject to the same law and government, (used to the same language, custom, and conversation;) one city, one family; one flock under one shepherd; lastly, one church or congregation: for, as sometimes every particular assembly of Christians, and sometimes a larger col-

* De Præscript. Iren. 1. 2. 3. &c.

lection of particular societies, combined together in one order, or under one government, are termed churches, (ἐκκλησίαι,) so the whole aggregation of all churches, of all Christian people in the world, is frequently called the Church; even as the whole body of those who lived in profession and obedience to the Jewish law (which was a type and image of the Christian church) was called קָהָל, (*Cahal*,) ἐκκλησία, the congregation; from whence I conceive this name was taken; and as among them that word did signify sometimes any particular assembly, sometimes the whole body of such persons, who had right and obligation to assemble for the service of God: so correspondently was the word used in the New Testament; sometimes for any society lesser or greater; sometimes for the whole body of God's new people; all the true subjects and servants of Christ; that is, for the catholic or universal society of the faithful; yet even in this latter sense there is some distinction; for sometimes it is taken in a sense, (partly extensive, partly restrained,) so as to signify all those good men, and only such, which in all places and all times did or shall faithfully worship and serve God; sometimes in a sense (in one respect more wide, in another more strict) for all those who at present, in any age, through all parts of the world, do openly profess the sincere faith and obedience of Christ; maintaining an external practice agreeable to that profession: according to both which senses we may interpret the Holy Catholic Church here, they being, as to the duty required of us, conjoined and co-ordinate: for whatever is said of the Church in Scripture, (all the characters and commendations attributed to it;) as it doth principally agree to it in the first of these senses, so it doth in some kind and measure agree to the latter: and therefore (without distinguishing) we may say that this is the Holy Catholic Church, which we believe; the 'Zion which the Lord hath chosen, which he hath desired for his habitation, where he hath resolved to place his rest and residence for ever:' 'The mountain seated above all mountains, unto which all nations should flow:' 'The house of God, built on a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail;' the pillar and firmament of truth, which it by its profession and practice in a manner supporteth and maintaineth: 'The new Jerusalem and city of God;' 'the mother

of us all;' 'the beloved spouse of the Lamb;' the elect generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar people: 'The Church which Christ hath purchased with his own blood;' 'which he delivered himself for, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and unblemished.'

Holy we see it is expressly said to be in Christ's design: holy, as consisting of persons separated from the world, (from profane and vain conversation,) and wholly devoted to God's service: 'chosen to be saints, and without blemish before God in love;' persons 'consecrated and constituted priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.' Holy, as in many respects peculiarly related to God; 'as his chosen people,' (in which respect the Jews were anciently called a holy, which is interpreted a chosen, special, peculiar, precious, separate people,) 'as his house and temple;' wherein he in a special manner doth reside, wherein he is continually worshipped; 'Now the temple of God is holy, whose temple are you,' saith St. Paul; as οἰκεῖοι τοῦ Θεοῦ, his domestics and familiars; as his children. Holy, as redeemed by Christ, cleansed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit; as professing a holy faith; as partakers of a holy and heavenly calling; as endued with holy graces and dispositions, performing holy services, obliged to holy conversation.

The belief and consideration of which point doth serve, 1. To engage us to persist in the truth of Christian doctrine, delivered by our Saviour and his Apostles, attested unto by the general consent of Christians; avoiding all novelties of opinion; 'not being carried about with various and strange doctrines;' 'not being like children tossed with waves, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,' in the cozenage of men, in craft, according to the method (or artifice) of deceit; (not being deluded with fine words, or fair pretences of many innovators;) but ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, 'holding the truth in love:' 2. In love; that is another duty we are hence obliged to; to maintain a hearty charity and good affection toward all good Christians; charity, which is the band that unites the Church, which

preserves it in a sweet order and unity: consequently, 3. Readily to correspond and communicate with all good Christians, (all societies sincerely professing and practising faith, charity, and obedience to our Lord,) communicating, I say, in all offices of piety: 4. Submitting to all lawful order and discipline; studying peace, and to our power promoting concord among them: consequently, 5. To disavow and shun all factious combinations whatever of men corrupting the truth, or disturbing the peace of the Church. In fine, sincerely to wish in our hearts, to pray earnestly for, to promote by our best endeavors, the peace and prosperity of that holy Catholic Church, whereof we should be members and children: all which things St. Paul directs us to in those few words, 'Pursue righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with those that call on (or are called by the name of) the Lord, with a pure heart.' I proceed.

The Communion of Saints.

THE words were not extant in any of the ancient Creeds, but were afterwards inserted: nor (as I conceive) doth the meaning of them much differ from what was intended in the precedent article, concerning the Catholic Church; and perhaps it was adjoined thereto, by way of apposition, for interpretation thereof. For it seems the meaning of them is this; that all the saints (those which are so either in outward esteem, as professing Christian faith and obedience; or those which are so in heart and inward disposition; those which either now converse on earth, or which are received into heaven: all the saints) either in obligation should, or in effect do, communicate, partake, join together, consent, and agree in what concerns saints or members of the same body; in believing and acknowleging the same heavenly truth; in performance of devotions and offices of piety toward God, with and for one another; in charitable affection and good-will toward each other; in affording mutual assistance and supplies toward each other's either temporal or spiritual good; in mutual condolency and compassion of each other's evil; congratulation and complacency in each other's good; 'in minding,' according to St. Paul's words, 'with care the same thing for one another: so that if

one member suffers, all the members suffer together with it; or if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.' This briefly seems to be the meaning of this point; and I need not farther labor to show the uses thereof; the doctrine so plainly carrying its obligation and use in its face.

CONCERNING THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

I TREATED last on the Catholic Church and Communion of Saints: between that article and that which immediately follows concerning the remission of sins, I think it convenient to interpose a brief consideration on the Power of the Keys; the which we are directed and enjoined sometime to discourse on, and may do it, as it seems, here most seasonably, it having so near a relation to the matter of both those articles; the Church, in which, by which, for which it is exercised, (by it also the communion of saints being maintained and preserved,) and the remission of sins, which (especially as to be understood here) is a partial and most considerable effect or consequent of its use. For though remission of sins may be taken in its utmost latitude for all remission indulged by God, and by what means, in what manner, on what account soever dispensed; yet according to the intention of those who compiled the Creed, it seems principally to design that formal remission of sins which was consigned by the Church's ministry; this being performed by virtue of a power imparted by Christ to the Church, called, as we shall see, the Power of the Keys; concerning which, therefore, it will be not unseasonable for us here briefly to discourse.

As God Almighty, being King and Sovereign Lord of the world, doth govern it partly by his own immediate hand of providence, partly by the mediation of visible deputies and vicegerents constituted by him in several provinces of that his kingdom, who, receiving authority from him, are obliged under him to govern in their respective places, according to rules of justice and equity prescribed by him, to the promotion of his honor and praise of his name, to the procurement of his subjects' benefit and welfare, (consisting chiefly in their leading a safe, quiet, and commodious life here, with enjoyment of those com-

forts which are suitable to men's nature,) each in his province most particularly regarding the welfare of those subjects committed to their charge, yet so as withal to respect the common peace and prosperity of mankind, maintaining (so far as may be) good correspondency with the rest, observing the rules of justice and humanity toward all: this authority committed to them by God containing all powers necessary or conducible to those purposes; the power of making and imposing laws; of propounding and bestowing rewards; of appointing and inflicting punishments; with obligation on the subjects' part to intire obedience and submission.

In the same (or in a very like) manner doth Christ, the Head and supreme Governor of the Church, administer his spiritual kingdom; partly by the immediate direction and governance of his Holy Spirit, partly by his presidency of governors appointed by him in several provinces and societies thereof, to manage things in such order as may best conduce first to his glory and service, (as well by the propagation and enlargement of this empire, as preservation and maintenance thereof in good condition, by procuring due reverence to his person and obedience to his laws,) as may also confer to the best advantage of his subjects, and their spiritual welfare; (consisting in their being instructed in duty, and disposed to perform it, their being purified from sin, and perfected in holiness, and fitted for the possession of that eternal happiness to which they are called, designed for them;) each in his province and society (yet so as withal to respect the good of the whole body, maintaining charitable affection toward, and peaceable commerce with, the rest) being particularly obliged to promote those ends; such authority including all power requisite to that purpose; of establishing fit orders and rules to be observed in their respective societies; of dispensing encouragements and inflicting penalties, agreeable to the nature of their office, and conducible to their designment; the subjects of this kingdom being obliged to obedience and compliance with those orders, to submit to those penalties and censures. Now this authority (either all or a great part of it) is commonly called *Potestas Clavium*, by a name taken from those words of our Saviour, wherein he promiseth St. Peter that he would 'give him the keys of the king-

dom of heaven:' concerning which promise we must first observe, that however it was made to St. Peter on a special occasion, yet the matter thereof was not peculiar and restrained to his person; for the particulars conjoined therewith, and which explain the meaning thereof, are otherwhere assigned to others as well as him. Christ there declares that on him he will build his church; and otherwhere we are informed that the church is built on the 'foundation of the Prophets and Apostles:' he promises that what he shall 'bind or loose on earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven;' and the same privilege is promised otherwhere, in express terms, to any congregation or society of Christians, and in terms equivalent to a certain meeting of disciples. This privilege therefore, and authority, was by our Saviour committed to the Church; and if to the Church, then (as to its use and exercise) to the governors thereof, who act in behalf thereof; to whom its preservation is commended, on whom the care of its welfare, its peace, its honor is incumbent: the which we shall at present suppose, and which by the nature, practice, end, and design of this power, will farther appear.

At present, for the better understanding the nature and extent of this power, we will consider, 1. Its name. 2. Its object, or correlative term. 3. The equivalent phrases by which it is expressed or explained. 4. The practice and exercise thereof. 5. The rise and occasion of its institution. 6. The necéssity and usefulness thereof. From the consideration of which particulars we may collect wherein it consists, to what it tends, how far it extends. We will touch them briefly.

1. The name Keys, being metaphorical, implies the thing thereby designed in its nature, or some chief property, (most obvious and conspicuous,) to resemble keys. Now they (as being instruments designed to no other purpose) have no other nature or property than opening or shutting the avenues or passages from one place to another; and consequently their effects being either to give entrance and admission, or to detain and keep within, or to stop the passage and exclude from a place; necessarily all or some of these actions (or somewhat answerable and like thereto) must agree to this power, in respect to that state or place which it refers to: it must be

therefore a power either admissive into, or retentive within, or exclusive from, or all these together, in respect to the kingdom of heaven, whereof it is called the Keys; no other reason being conceivable of its obtaining that appellation; and we see, when this metaphor is used in like cases, either all or one of these effects are by way of interpretation expressed; as when of the holy and true one (that is, of our Saviour) it is said in the Revelation, 'That he hath the key of David;' it is subjoined, 'He openeth, and none shutteth; he shutteth, and none openeth.' And when our Saviour imputes to the lawyers, that they took away the key of knowlege, he explains the meaning of his expression by adding, 'that they would not enter themselves, and those who were entering they hindered:' and likewise in St. Matthew, concerning the Scribes and Pharisees; 'Ye shut the kingdom of heaven' (the same thing as here) 'before men; for yourselves do not enter, nor do you suffer those that are entering.' Whence, it seems, may be collected, that this power (this having the keys) is a power of admission into, and exclusion from, the place or state which it relates to: which we must next consider; for such must this power be, as its term or object doth admit or require.

2. As to the term it relates to, 'the kingdom of heaven,' that, according to the New Testament use, is capable especially of two acceptions. It first commonly signifies the state or constitution of religion under the gospel, in opposition or contradistinction to the state of things under the ancient law. In the time of the law, God's kingdom was in a manner earthly; the land of Israel was his dominion, in Salem was his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion; Jerusalem was his royal seat, ('the city of the great King,') the temple there his palace; he governed more immediately by oracles from time to time put into the mouth of his priests and prophets, consulting him for orders and directions; he received more visible services and homages from his subjects; he granted earthly conveniences and privileges for them; he encouraged them to the obedience of his law by promises of temporal reward; deterred them from disobedience and disloyalty by threatening temporal pains and damages: but under the evangelical dispensation, as God's kingdom is more capacious and unlimited in extension, so he

hath assumed no peculiar residence on earth, nor is worshipped otherwise than as being in heaven, the natural seat of his special majesty and glory; he rules by a law perpetual and immutable, revealed from thence; the sacrifices and adorations he requires are spiritual and invisible for the most part, and addressed thither; the privileges appertaining to the subjects of this kingdom chiefly refer thither; they are allured to obedience by rewards to be conferred there; are withdrawn from disobedience by penalties referring to a future state. This state therefore of things is called the kingdom of heaven, of God, of Christ: that which was coming and approaching in the time of our Saviour's humble sojourning on earth, is now present, he reigning in heaven, into which they are said to be translated; to have 'access unto the heavenly Jerusalem;' to be 'made fellow-citizens and coheirs with the saints in light;' to have 'their conversation in heaven;' to 'partake a heavenly calling;' to be 'seated together with Christ in heavenly places:' who with sincere persuasion of mind embrace the doctrine of Christ, with firm resolution submit to his law, becoming thereby subjects of this heavenly kingdom, undertaking the obligations, and partaking the privileges belonging thereto. This state, I say, or relation, is thus called; or (which comes to the same thing, and makes no alteration as to the matter in hand) taking the word personally, (and concretely as it were,) the society of men put into such a state, the body of persons standing so related, (that is, the Church of Christ,) may be called the kingdom of heaven. This acception is so frequent and obvious, that it is needless to cite instances, or stand on the confirmation thereof: but the phrase is also sometime taken for the perfection or utmost improvement of this state; that αἰώνιος βασιλεία, 'everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' as St. Peter calls it; that state of glory and bliss, into which all good Christians, who shall through this temporal life persist in faithful obedience unto God, shall hereafter be received; that kingdom, into which 'not every one who saith, Lord, Lord,' (who makes an external profession or pretence,) 'but he that doeth the will of God, who is in heaven, shall enter.' Now whereas these two states (one being a state of grace and favor with God here, the other of

glory and joy with God hereafter) are in their nature, and according to their prime intention, inseparably coherent, one being subordinate to the other; that, as a step or degree, a way or tendency to this; this, a completion and consummation of that; that being supposed as precedent in order to this, this in design consequent on that; therefore what immediately concerns one, doth by consequence respect the other: and in our case, a power to open or shut, to admit into or exclude from, the state of grace, may be supposed and said in a manner consequently to be a power of opening and shutting the state of glory hereafter; and reciprocally, both jointly may be well understood in their kind and order. But since the persons to whom this power is imparted do exercise it here, ('and what thou shalt bind or loose on earth,' saith our Saviour, implying the use of that power which he promised to communicate to St. Peter;) since the immediate effects thereof are here below, therefore it seems fit that we understand the kingdom of heaven in our case more directly and immediately the present kingdom of heaven, or state of grace into which Christians are here received, (or, if you please, the society itself of persons so instated;) though more remotely, and by consequence, it may imply the state of glory hereafter.

We should therefore consider how these states (especially that of grace here more immediately respected) may be opened or shut; how one man may be enabled or empowered to permit entrance, or debar others from it: and this we may conceive effectible either by yielding some real furtherance on one side, or some effectual hindrance on the other, in respect of getting into or abiding in this state; or else by some formal act of judgment and authority, by virtue of which some are admitted to partake the rights and privileges of this state, or some excluded and rendered incapable thereof. I say, first, by real furtherance or hinderance; as on the one side, they who instruct or show the way, who persuade, who encourage men to enter, who afford any means or opportunities, may be said to open this state; (as in like manner it is said that 'God did open to the Gentiles a door of faith;' and St. Paul saith, 'a great and effectual door was opened to him at Ephesus,' and another at Troas; and he exhorts the Colossians to pray 'that God

would open to him θύραν τοῦ λόγου, a door of preaching the mystery of Christ;' where opening a door denotes ministering opportunities and advantages of performing the things specified.) And on the other side, they who keep from knowing the way which leads thither, who dissuade or discourage from entering, who subtract the means or prevent opportunities of doing it, who interpose obstacles or obstructions of difficulty, danger, or damage, may be said to shut, or exclude; (thus are the scribes said 'to shut the kingdom of heaven;') that is, to hinder men from embracing the doctrine, or submitting to the rule of Christ, by discouraging them from giving attention and credence to what he taught, (which is otherwhere called 'taking away the key of knowlege;') as also by terrifying them from acknowlegement of the truth they saw and liked, by reproaches, persecutions, and punishments laid on them who did it. Thus may this state be opened and shut. As also it may so by judicial and authoritative acts; by way of consent and approbation declared, of decision and sentence pronounced; in such manner as we duly see men admitted into, and debarred from, the state of citizens and freemen, (from enjoying in esteem and effect the capacities and immunities belonging to the members of such or such societies and corporations,) by the consent or dissent, approbation or refusal, decree or sentence, formally signified, of persons empowered to those purposes. Now regarding the nature of that state whereof we are speaking, as to real furtherance, since respect to God's glory and man's salvation obliges all men to endeavor that men be brought into this state, the same being in a special manner incumbent on the governors and pastors of the church; therefore this may be conceived one way of opening, or one part of this power; although to shut by way of real hindrance, in the manner described, cannot properly belong to any, duty and charity forbidding really and finally to obstruct entrance into the state of grace; the scribes and lawyers being blamed for not suffering men (otherwise willing and disposed) to enter into the kingdom of heaven. As to the other kind of opening and shutting, by legal proceeding; as all persons, according to charitable estimation, worthy and well qualified, ought to be admitted thereinto; so neither, according to the reason of the thing

itself, nor in regard to the public benefit, nor respecting the good of the persons pretending thereto, should some be permitted to enjoy the communion thereof: therefore to distinguish and separate such persons, the appointment and use of such a power is requisite. This will appear more plainly when we come to consider the necessity and utility of this power. Farther,

3dly. For the phrases equivalent, by which in places of the gospel most parallel this power is expressed and explained, they are especially those of binding and loosing, of retaining and remitting sins. As for binding and loosing; when our Saviour had promised to bestow on St. Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, he signifies what effect the use of them should produce, by adding conjunctively, 'And whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

Now binding may signify any kind of determination, of restraint, of detention on persons or things; and loosing, that which is opposite thereto, the leaving indifferent, laying open, setting free of any person or thing respectively. He that (having good authority to do so) enjoins or prohibits any thing doth bind that thing, (determining its moral quality, making it to be good or bad, lawful or unlawful,) and binds the persons concerned to observation or abstinence; he that permits the same thing to be done, or dispenses with its doing, may be said to loose: thus all laws are bonds, and are said to oblige; and the removing or suspending their force, in whole or in part, (by abrogation, or dispensation, or exception,) is consequently a loosing, or relaxation; and the power of binding and loosing thus would be a power legislative, of making and repealing laws and rules of action; and in some analogy hereto, the power (with authority and by office) of interpreting laws, that is, of determining and declaring what is commanded, what prohibited, what permitted, may be called a power of binding and loosing, (and if we believe Mr. Selden, and Grotius perhaps from him, in Matt. xvi. is so commonly termed among Jewish writers:) also the exercise of any jurisdiction, the decision of any case, the warding any amends to be done, any mulct to be

imposed, any punishment to be inflicted, is a binding; to which kind of binding it seems plain that place doth more particularly refer, wherein our Saviour pronounces valid the arbitration between persons in difference made by one or two friends; or (if that cannot terminate the controversy) the final judgment of the church, concerning which he with asseveration pronounces, 'Amen, (verily) I say unto you, that whatsoever ye (a church of you my disciples) shall (viz. in this manner, by way of jurisdiction or arbitration) bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven:' all your sentences and decisions (duly and impartially made) shall be valid and ratified by God himself. Also the result of any contract is an obligation, and they who make or enter into it do bind the parties concerned, (themselves and others.) Moreover, the detaining any how under one's power or disposal, is binding; and the setting free thence, a loosing answerable thereto; ('Ought not,' saith our Saviour, 'this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?' That which is here called bound by Satan is otherwhere expressed by καταδυναστεύεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου, (being under the power and dominion of the devil.) Also binding may imply detaining in any present condition, (as suppose a condition of guilt, of disfavor, of obnoxiousness to wrath and punishment, either positively, by keeping on the shackles which hold them, or negatively, by withdrawing the means of getting out;) and correspondently, loosing is a freeing from such a state, by removing the causes which hindered, or applying the means which procure liberty. And to this last sense the other equivalent phrase (used in St. John, of retaining and remitting of sins) doth seem to refer; 'Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained;' that is, whomsoever ye shall think fit to detain in a state of guilt, to refuse pardon and reconcilement unto, they shall continue in such a state, they shall rest deprived of those benefits; whomsoever he shall judge worthy to be absolved from guilt, and received unto favor, they shall effectually be pardoned and reconciled in God's sight; your act, in respect to that

remission or retention, shall be approved and ratified in heaven. Now from these considerations concerning the name of this power, and the term or object thereof, and of the phrases in some measure equivalent to that whereby it is expressed, although we may probably infer somewhat concerning the nature thereof, yet the perfect nature and full extent thereof seems best deducible from that which we must next consider.

4. The practice and exercise of this power; which being by our Saviour committed to this church, and to the Apostles as governors thereof, and acting in its behalf, we cannot suppose they would act beyond or beside it. What we see them (in way of office and authority) doing, applicable and agreeable to the meaning of those words, as hitherto in some sort explained, we may well believe done by virtue of this power so expressly by our Lord bestowed on them; and the like we may reasonably suppose concerning the church's nearly succeeding to their times, that what they generally practised in way of government was by authority, not arbitrarily assumed to themselves, but derived from Christ's donation and appointment, declared to be so, directed and determined to particular use by the Apostles, when they planted and settled each church. Now for the Apostles' practice; we find, as (first) to the opening part of this power, that they did with great earnestness and diligence labor to bring men into the kingdom of heaven by instruction, invitation, and persuasion, (not sparing any pains, not regarding any difficulty, not shunning any danger for the effecting hereof;) 'Not' (to use St. Paul's words in the Acts) 'keeping back any thing that was profitable, but showing and teaching them publicly from house to house, thoroughly testifying both to Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' That having thus induced men, and qualified them to enter, (by entertaining the doctrine of Christ, and resolution to live according thereto,) they did actually admit them into this state by a solemn act, containing a symbolical representation of the nature of this state, with the benefits and privileges accompanying it; declaring the persons so admitted to be received into a state of intire favor with God, to be freed from all precedent guilt, to have all their sins remitted and blotted out, to be redeemed

from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ, God's beloved Son. That by constant exhortation to perseverance and progress in faith and obedience, (against all temptations, persecution, and seductions,) in St. Paul's words, 'warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, they might present (or render) every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' they did endeavor to preserve and retain men in this state; that when men, being overborne by temptation of the flesh or persecution of the world, or seduced by the cunning of false teachers, did decline, and were in danger of deserting the profession or practice agreeable to this state, they did labor zealously to reclaim, and resettle them therein; and that such having fallen from it of themselves, or having been (by reason of their scandalous and contagious practice) in way of censure and punishment removed from it, they were ready (on their repentance sufficiently declared) to receive and restore them, reinstating them in their former condition, and remitting their offences; ('If any man,' saith St. Paul, 'be prevented in a transgression, ye that are spiritual, καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον, restore (reestablish, set in a right and intire state) such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted:' and, 'If any one doth not obey our words—mark such an one, and do not converse with him, that he may be ashamed: however do not account him an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.') And more plainly, St. Paul enjoins the Corinthians to account a punishment imposed on a grievous offender sufficient; that they 'should favor (or indulge with, or forgive) and comfort him, lest he should be swallowed up with grief;' that they should 'confirm love toward him;' declaring that what favor they should show in such cases, he should consent and comply with them therein. And he otherwhere tells us that the power he had bestowed on him by Christ, according to which he might, on occasion, use persons severely, was for edification, and not for destruction; that the extremest punishment inflicted (delivery to Satan, from whose dominion they were by entrance in Christ's kingdom freed) was for destruction of the flesh, 'that the spirit might be saved in the day of judgment,' and that they 'might learn not to blaspheme;' intimating a restitution into this state by repentance. And, lastly,

whereas St. Paul advises Timothy not to 'lay suddenly his hands on any man, nor (thereby) to partake with other men's sins;' he seems to imitate the practice of receiving offenders into full communion of the church, and readmittance into this state, signified by that ceremonious action. Thus did the Apostles use the Power of the Keys on one hand; opening, and admitting, and keeping within the state of grace. We also shall find them shutting and excluding from it, by refusing and rejecting such as were not worthy and well disposed for it; withdrawing the means of instruction and persuasion; not 'casting their pearls to swine;' 'shaking the dust off their feet, when men' (as it is in the Acts) 'did thrust away the word of God, and did not judge themselves worthy of eternal life.' We find them also exercising authority on such as were admitted; dealing severely with persons walking disorderly in any kind of lewd and vicious practice, disobeying their words and orders, making divisions and scandals, breathing false and bad doctrines, contrary to that which they had taught; such they enjoin Christians to decline from, and avoid all communion and conversation with them; such, as bad leaven, they command to be purged out from the Christian congregations, to be taken from among them, to be delivered up to Satan. Thus did they shut the kingdom of heaven: and so, according to their example and order, (as we should in reason suppose,) did the governors of the Christian church after them both open and shut it; opening it by baptism, (which the Fathers sometime expressly call κλεὶς οὐρανῶν, 'the key of heaven,') and receiving persons well instructed and well disposed into it; opening it again by receiving persons who had been for heinous offences put out, on due testification and reasonable assurance of their amendment and repentance; and shutting it on persons unfit to enter, separating and excluding from it such as notoriously misbehaved themselves therein, to the dishonor, disturbance, and detriment of the church. I cannot insist on particulars, nor stand to produce testimonies concerning them; let one clear passage (as to the latter part, shutting) out of Tertullian's Apologetic, wherein he declares the manner commonly practised in the Christian churches, suffice. *Certe*, saith he, *fidem sanctis vocibus pascimus, spem erigimus, fiduciam*

figimus, disciplinam præceptorum nihilominus inculcationibus densamus; ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes, et censura divina; nam et judicatur magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei conspectu, summumque futuri judicii præjudicium est, si quis ita deliquerit, ut a communicatione orationis, et conventus, et omnis sancti commercii relegetur.

5. As for the rise and occasion of this power, (beside the necessity and utility thereof, which might cause it to be appointed,) we may consider that, as all, or the greater part, of institutions and ceremonies practised among Christians, as the whole frame of government in their churches, seem to have been drawn from, or according to, the pattern of God's ancient Church, (Christianity not affecting novelty or difference from that, but so far as consisted with its main design of reforming men's minds, and promoting the spiritual service of God, and suited with reason or expediency, endeavoring conformity to it, and resemblance thereof;) so it seems our Saviour, in this particular, did but accommodate and vest in the governors of his Church a power used in that of the Jews; for we shall find this power in its several parts not only represented in type, but expressed in direct and real practice. We see that the Jewish Church was opened to proselytes by circumcision, by washing, by expiatory sacrifices; that unclean and leprous persons were excluded from the camp and congregation, prohibited contest and conversation, that they might not annoy or infect those which were pure and sound; that on their recovery and purification they were restored to society and conversation; that that Church was wholly shut on enormous offenders, (such who could not be kept in order, who presumptuously neglected some great duty, or violated some great commandment, who disgraced the religion by scandalous practice, or disturbed the peace by contumacious carriage, refusing to hear the judge and the priest;) that, I say, such persons were quite shut out by total extermination and excision. We find also several degrees of ecclesiastical censure (answerable to the degrees of offence) practised among them, alluded to in the New Testament; separating from communion and converse, exclusion from the synagogue, anathematising or imprecating, and devoting to God's judgment: the practice of which things being grounded in rea-

son, and suitable to the state of the Christian Church, (as well as to that of the Jews,) and conducible to the welfare thereof, it is no wonder a power of doing the like was granted unto the Christian Church, and exercised by the superintendency thereof. But these things I cannot stand to pursue minutely and distinctly.

I should, lastly, consider the necessity and usefulness of this power; how necessary and conducible it is to promote the ends of Christian religion; to preserve the honor of the Church and of its governors; to secure the members thereof from contagion of bad manners and influences of bad example; to maintain good order and peace; to restrain from offending, and reform them that shall offend; and to the like purposes. But I shall leave this point to your farther consideration.

The forgiveness of Sins; the Resurrection of the Body; the Life everlasting.

THAT it is the natural condition of mankind to lie under a violent proclivity (or rather an unavoidable necessity) of frequently transgressing the plainest dictates of reason, the surest rules of equity, however fortified by the authority of God himself, commanding and requiring duty, promising reward, and threatening punishment, continual experience shows; that hereby men do not only much disgrace and abuse themselves, (doing against the dignity of their nature and their own particular welfare,) but highly injure, dishonor, and ill requite God, (their Maker, their natural Lord, their Benefactor, from whom they have received their being, under whose power they wholly are, to whom they owe all their good, and consequently to whom all obedience, respect, and gratitude is due from them,) is also manifest; their own consciences will tell them so much; their own reason will therefore condemn them: that hereby they are involved in a state of guilt and debt, become obnoxious to the just wrath and vengeance of God, beyond all possibility of making (by themselves) any reparation or satisfaction; (for they are more apt to incur new, than able to make amends for old, blame; to accumulate more than to discharge foregoing

debts; that hence they must fall into a condition of restless fear and inextricable perplexity of mind, dreading the effects of divine justice and vengeance sometime to come on them; that there cannot in reality be any other relief or deliverance from this distress than from the benignity of God disposing him to bear patiently, to forgive mercifully these offences; not in their apprehension any such relief, (any freedom from such discomfort and anxiety,) than from a plain signification of God's being so graciously disposed, is also clear from the same light. Now of such a disposition in God (to be appeased and to pardon offences) we find a general presumption among those who have had any knowlege or opinion concerning God, (drawn, I suppose, partly from primitive tradition, partly from experience of God's forbearance to punish and continuance to bestow the common benefits of Providence on offenders, partly from an opinion that bounty and clemency are perfections and excellences worthy of God; or, lastly, from a natural inclination in men (necessary to that quiet and comfort of their minds) to flatter themselves with pleasing hopes;) we find, I say, such a general presumption concerning God's disposition to be reconcilable and merciful to offenders, especially on their acknowlegement of guilt and need of favor, together with a declaration of their willingness to make him such amends as they are able to do: such a presumption to have been, that universal custom of presenting sacrifices and obligations to God doth sufficiently show; which implied in them who presented them a confession of guilt to be expiated, of punishment to be deserved, (such as was represented in the destruction of a living creature,) as also a desire of making satisfaction, (intimated by their cheerful parting with somewhat dear and valuable to them;) on which considerations of humble acknowlegement, of willingness to satisfy in a manner so signal and solemn, declared they did hope God's wrath would be appeased, and his judgments averted from them. Such, it seems, was the common presumption of mankind; which yet could not satisfy or quiet the minds of them who should consider, that as such performances could not really take away guilt, nor sufficiently repair those inestimable wrongs and affronts put on God, so God had never plainly declared his intention to consider or accept them; so

that in effect their opinion was somewhat unreasonable, and their hope groundless. This observation I propound, as yielding a good argument (the general consent of mankind) to prove that the doctrine (concerning remission of sins obtainable from God) is a fundamental point and a principal part of all religion, and that yet (as to any solid and certain ground of believing or hoping it) it is peculiar to Christian religion, God never before the revelation (evangelical) having clearly and fully signified that he would pardon offences (at least all of them, heinous and presumptuous offences) committed against him. What God would have done he had taught partly by a natural law and light implanted in every man's soul, partly by express promulgation made to the Patriarchs of old, and derived to posterity from them by tradition; how men in respect thereto behaved themselves, their conscience (accusing or excusing them) could testify; but how, in case of transgressing those dictates and laws, he would deal with them, he never plainly had discovered. Indeed the Jewish dispensation (which was particular and preparatory to Christianity) did appoint and accept expiations for some lesser faults committed out of ignorance and infirmity; but did not pretend to justify from all things, (as St. Paul in the Acts speaks,) nor promise or give hope of pardon on any terms for great presumptuous sins committed wilfully with a high hand; it rather threatens an indelible continuance of guilt on an extreme and inevitable vengeance against the perpetrators of them; 'The soul,' saith the law, 'that doth presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off,' (by God's special providence;) 'his iniquity shall be on him.' And we know how solemn and dreadful imprecations were pronounced against not only the transgressors of some particular laws, but generally against all those who did 'not continue in all things written in the law to do them:' so that the remission tendered by Moses was of a very narrow extent, and such as could hardly exempt any man from obligation to and fear of punishment. Indeed, to prevent utter despair, and that which is naturally consequent thereon, a total neglect of duty, God

was pleased by his prophets among that people occasionally to intimate something of farther grace reserved; and that he was willing (on condition of humble and sincere repentance) to receive even those, who were guilty of the highest offences, to mercy. But these discoveries, as they were special and extraordinary, so were they farther preparatory to the gospel, and as dawnings to that bright day of grace, which did by Christ spread its comfortable light over the world, revealing to mankind a general capacity of God's favor, (procured in a manner admirable and strange,) obtainable by means declared, on terms propounded therein.

Thereby is fully and clearly manifested to us how God, in free mercy and pity to us, (all our works being unworthy of any acceptance, all our sacrifices unfit in the least part to satisfy for our offences,) was pleased himself to provide an obedience worthy of his acceptance, and thoroughly well-pleasing to him, (imputable to us as performed by one of our kind and race, and apt to appease God's just wrath against such a generation of rebels;) to provide a sacrifice in nature so pure, in value so precious, as might be perfectly satisfactory for our offences: in regard to which obedience God is become reconciled, and opens his arms of grace to mankind; in respect to which sacrifice he tenders remission to all men that on his terms (most equal and easy terms) are willing to embrace it. This is the great doctrine, so peculiar to the gospel, from whence especially it hath its name, from whence it is styled 'the Gospel of grace;' this is the 'good tidings of great joy to all people,' which the angel first preached at our Saviour's birth, which the Apostles were ordained to 'preach and testify unto all nations,' as the main point of Christian religion, (that in our Saviour's name 'repentance and remission of of sins should be preached unto all nations;') that God had 'exalted him to his right hand as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins;' (to give repentance, that is, to give μετανοίας τόπον, that is, a room for repentance in order to mercy, to make it acceptable and available for the remission of sins.) 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'did conclude all men under disobedience, that he might have mercy on all:' 'All men have sinned, and are come short of the glory

of God:' 'But we are justified freely by his grace, by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath propounded a propitiatory, by faith in his blood, for the demonstration of his righteousness, toward the forgiveness of forepast offences.' In which words of St. Paul all things concerning the subject of our present discourse are expressed or implied: the nature of it, (freeing us from guilt, and rendering us just in God's sight;) the causes whence it sprang; the external impulsive in respect of God, or occasion thereof, our necessity and misery; the internal impulsive, God's grace and free goodness; also the meritorious cause procuring it, (our Saviour's obedience and suffering, whereby he did make atonement for our sins;) the ends whither it tends, (the demonstration of God's goodness and his justice, or of his merciful justice, signified by the word δικαιοσύνη;) the terms and condition, on compliance with or performance of which the effect of it should follow, (faith; that is, a sincere embracement or hearty persuasion concerning the truth of that doctrine or revelation which offered it, implying also a firm resolution to submit to the yoke of Christ, and obey his righteous laws;) lastly, the means of conveying, declaring, and confirming it, (implied by the words, πάρεσις προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων, the remission of forepast sins; such as was solemnly exhibited, signified, ratified in the Church ministries of baptism, absolution, and reconciliation, on penance and confession, especially the first.) These things I cannot insist on particularly or distinctly, nor do much need to do so, having had occasion to consider most of them formerly in these discourses, especially when we spake concerning the salvation procured by Jesus, the sacerdotal office of Christ, the death and passion of our Saviour. I shall therefore only now briefly touch (that which seems here specially referred to) the ordinary manner of conveying this great grace to men by the ministry of the Church. To which purpose we may consider that although it be true that God generally propounds remission of sins (on account of our Saviour's performances and in his name) to 'all that truly repent and turn unto him,' that he chiefly grants it on this consideration, nor withholds it from any on the blameless default of any other performance; yet he requires, (and to

earthly prince among us, (so infinitely inferior to that of God,) we should have reason to admire his goodness and clemency, did he pass them over, did he not with extreme severity avenge them. There can be no higher than those we have offered to Almighty God, (none capable in any comparison of such aggravations:) how unexpressibly great therefore is his goodness, that freely offers us pardon; that earnestly invites and intreats us to accept it; that hath been at such an expense, and condescended so low, to purchase for us the means thereof! It is ὑπερβάλλουσα χάρις, an excessive grace of God; ὑπερβάλλων πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος, an excessive riches of grace; ἀνεκδιήγητος δωρεὰ (an unutterable gift) of God, as St. Paul speaketh. Let us consider our state, and the nature of God, with the aggravations of our offences grounded on them, and we shall in some measure perceive it so, and what thankfulness we are consequently obliged to render.

2. It should beget in us, as grateful respect, so ardent love to God, in proportion to the favor we have received. It was his love that moved him to forgive us our sins, ('God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, did quicken us with Christ, who were dead in trespasses and sins.') And to this love of pity in God should answer a love of reverence in us toward so gracious a Lord. Our Saviour, you know, propounds the question to St. Peter concerning two debtors, of whom one did owe fifty, the other five hundred pence; and both being forgiven by the creditor, 'whom he thought of the two should love him most:' he answers, according to the plain dictate of nature, 'he to whom most was forgiven:' and our Saviour approves his answer with an Ὀρθῶς ἔκρινας, 'Thou hast judged rightly:' and the holy penitent, (Mary Magdalene,) 'because many sins were forgiven her, therefore did love much.' So doth reason and example oblige us to do.

3. It affords matter of comfort to us; a comfortable sense of mercy conferred, a comfortable hope of mercy to be obtained; 'Blessed is he,' saith the psalmist, 'whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is pardoned: blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity:' 'Being justified by

faith, we have peace with God.' All good Christians are in this blessed state, and may enjoy a delightful satisfaction in reflecting thereon, able to support them against all other occasions of sorrow or displeasure that may befal them; and it will fortify us against despair, to consider that however God hath been offended by our sins, he will be appeased by our repentance: so that our sins shall be blotted out and vanish as a thick cloud, which passing away leaves a serene sky behind it; 'If any man sin, we have an advocate,' &c.

4. It is also an engagement to obedience; 'Behold,' said our Saviour to the diseased man, 'thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come on thee,' Having obtained a cure and state of health by God's grace, we by relapsing into sin expose ourselves to greater danger, we incur deeper guilt. Our state, though not wholly desperate, becomes very perilous. It is better continuing in the ship, than committing our safety to a plank.

5. Lastly, the consideration of this point will show us how much we are obliged (in conformity and compliance with God) to bear with and forgive the offences or injuries done against us. You know how strongly our Saviour presses the consideration of God's free pardon bestowed on us to this purpose; how he sets out the unreasonableness and disingenuity of them which are 'hard-hearted toward their brethren and fellow-servants in this case;' how he threatens unavoidable severity toward those who 'do not from their hearts forgive their brethren their trespasses,' and promises remission of sins to them who (according to what they in their prayers profess themselves to do) 'shall forgive to men the offences committed against them;' making it not only an indispensable condition, but, as it were, a means of obtaining God's mercy and favor. But I leave it to your meditation to make farther profitable deductions from this point. So I proceed.

The Resurrection of the Body.

Τῆς σαρκὸς, of the flesh, it is in Greek; which comes to the same. The immortality or surviving of the soul after death (as

being a foundation of receiving reward and punishment for men's deeds in this life) hath been in all religions, (except, perchance, that of the ancient Jews; but they afterwards found it necessary to suppose this point—when they found the most pious obnoxious to greatest affliction, which propounded great rewards and punishments in this life, assuring that Providence which dispensed them, by sensible experiments;) hath been, I say, almost in all religions deemed a necessary principle, as the most potent excitement to virtue, the most powerful determent from wickedness, the most satisfactory ground of resolving difficulties concerning the nature and providence of God; which general consent, (running through all ancient religions,) according to that of Cicero, *Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium*, argueth it not only agreeable to common reason, but deduced from original tradition; without which (considering the variable dispositions and capacities of mankind) it is hard to conceive so many nations should unanimously conspire in an opinion of that nature (so removed from sense) however reasonable. Indeed the philosophers, men affecting to soar above the pitch of vulgar apprehension, and who, perceiving the great superstition and vanity immixed with common religions, (as they had been by fraud and folly corrupted, and become degenerate from primitive tradition,) did not scruple to call any thing delivered in them to question, and to determine about them according to reasons offering themselves, did differ herein; yet so as scarce any who acknowleged a Divinity, which (having made and governing the world, and to whom therefore reverence and service from men was due) did not approve and assert it; as indeed they must needs do in consonance to their opinion concerning God, all arguments on which religion is built, inferring it; which they did endeavor farther to confirm by reasons, drawn from the nature of man, which you may see collected and elegantly urged by Cicero in the first of his Tusculan Questions: which arguments yet we may perceive had not so great an efficacy either on him or on Socrates himself, (the first great promoter of this doctrine, as deducible from reason,) that they were thoroughly confident of its truth, and freed from all doubt concerning it. The certainty

thereof we owe to Christianity alone, and to his instruction who brought life and immortality (that is, immortal life) to light: it plainly teaches us that when we die we shall not wholly perish like brute beasts, (or other natural bodies, when they are dissolved;) that our souls do not vanish into nothing, nor are resolved into invisible principles; but return into God's hand, and the place by him appointed for them, there continuing in that life which is proper to a soul. This Christianity teaches us; and not only so, but farther, that our bodies themselves shall be raised again out of their dust and corruption, and our souls shall be reunited to them, and our persons restored to their perfect integrity of nature: the bringing of which effects to pass, by the divine power, is called most commonly, 'the resurrection of the dead,' (or 'from the dead, ἐκ νεκρῶν,) and simply, the resurrection; sometimes, the regeneration, (or iterated nativity,) and 'being born from the dead;' which names plainly imply a respect to the body, and to the person of a man, as constituted of body and soul: the mere permanency of our souls in being and life could not be called (with any propriety or truth) a resurrection: that which never had fallen could not be said to be raised up; that which did never die could not be restored from death; nor could men be said to rise again, but in respect to that part, or that state which had fallen, and ceased to be: and as to be born at first signifies the production and union of the parts essential to a man, body and soul; so to be born again implies the restitution and reunion of the same; a man becoming thereby the same intire person which he was before. The same is also sometimes signified in terms more formal and express; 'the quickening of the dead;' 'the vivification of our mortal bodies;' 'the redemption of our body;' 'this corruptible (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο, this very same corruptible) putting on immortality;' 'those which are in the graves hearing Christ's voice, and proceeding forth to resurrection of life or judgment;' 'the awaking of them which sleep in the dust of the earth;' the sea, the death, the hell (or universal grave) yielding up their dead; which expressions, and the like, occurring, most clearly and fully prove the restitution of the body, and its reunion with the soul, and the

person becoming in substance completely the same that he was; which truth of all perhaps which Christianity revealed, as most new and strange, was the hardliest received, and found most opposition among the heathens, especially philosophers; 'Hearing the resurrection of the dead, some of them mocked; others said, We will hear thee again about this;' so was St. Paul's discourse entertained among the Athenians: some derided it, as (it seems) conceiving it a thing altogether impossible, or very improbable to happen; they did not see how it could, why it should be done; (as Pliny,* somewhere counting the revolution of the dead to life a thing impossible to be performed, otherwhere a childish foppery to suppose it.) But why it should be impossible to the divine power no good reason can be assigned. To re-collect the dispersed parts of a man's body; to dispose them into their due order; to reduce them unto a temper fit to serve vital functions; to rejoin the soul unto the body so restored; why should it be impossible, why seem hard to him, who first framed and tempered our body out of the dust, and inspired the soul into it; yea, to him, who out of mere confusion digested the whole world into so wonderful an order and harmony; to him that into a dead lump of earth inserted such varieties of life; that from seeds buried in the ground, and corrupted there, causes such goodly plants to spring forth; that hath made all nature to subsist by continual vicissitudes of life and death; every morning (as it were) and every spring representing a general resurrection? ['Ah Lord God!' saith the prophet Jeremiah, 'thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee:' too hard for omniscient wisdom to contrive, for omnipotent strength to execute.] And what difficulties soever fancy may suggest, can we doubt of that to be possible which experience shows us to be done? Let that passage in the prophet Ezekiel suffice, concerning very dry bones scattered about in an open field, which at God's word came together, and united in order; the sinews and the flesh coming on them, and the skin covering them; and, lastly, breath coming

* Nat. Hist. ii. 7. vii. 55.

into them, so that they lived, and stood on their feet, an exceeding great army; whether we suppose it to be a parable or a history, to relate to the last resurrection or not, implies yet a possibility of such a resurrection, and yields a lively resemblance thereof: but more plainly do many instances of particular resurrections, for the confirmation of our faith recorded iu Scripture: 'Women,' saith the author to the Hebrews, 'received their dead by resurrection;' relating to the widow of Sarepta's child, who by Elias's prayer did revive; and the Shunamite's child raised by Elisha: to which might be added the man, who being let down into Elisha's sepulchre, and touching the bones of that prophet, did revive and stand on his feet: and in the New Testament we have likewise divers examples of persons by our Saviour raised and restored from death to life, Jairus's daughter, the young man of Nain, Lazarus, (who had been four days dead, in which time bodies come to putrify and smell,) and more remarkably it is said in St. Matthew's gospel, that at our Saviour's death 'many tombs were opened, and many bodies of saints that had departed rose, and coming out of the tombs (after our Saviour's resurrection) entered into the holy city, and did appear to many,' (or publicly;) a clear and full experiment of a miraculous resurrection, like to that we believe: but above all, our Saviour's resurrection may confirm our faith herein, it being designed to that purpose, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν, 'God holding forth,' saith St. Paul, 'a convincing argument to all of the resurrection,' (and other appendant verities taught in the gospel,) 'raising him up from the dead:' 'And if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some that there is no resurrection of the dead?' how can any man deny that to be possible which is so really exemplified? Nay, how can we doubt that we shall follow, when we see him going before, as the captain of life, as our forerunner, as the first-fruits of them that sleep, and firstborn from the dead, as that second Adam, whom it is congruous that we should all conform to in the restitution of our nature, as we did to the first Adam in the decay thereof; that we should live by him, as we died by the other; and bear the image of the heavenly immortal man, as we did

that of the earthly and mortal one? Neither (as not impossible so) can this resurrection be showed improbable, or implausible, but rather very consonant to the reason of the thing. Man, according to original design and frame, doth consist of soul and body; those parts have a natural relation, an aptitude, and an appetite (it seems by their unwillingness to part) to cohabit, communicate, and cooperate with each other: many actions very proper to man's nature cannot be performed without their conjunctions, concurrence, many capacities of joy and comfort (with their contraries) result thence: the separation of them we see how violent and repugnant it is to nature; and we are taught that it is penal, and a consequence of sin; and therefore cannot be good and perfect. No wonder then, that God designing to restore man to his ancient integrity, and more, (to a higher perfection,) to reward him with all the felicity his nature is capable of, (on one hand, I mean; as on the other hand to punish and afflict him, according to his demerit,) should raise the body, and rejoin it to the soul, that it might contribute its natural subserviency to such enjoyments and sufferings respectively: not to omit the congruity in justice, that the bodies which did partake in works of obedience and holiness, or of disobedience and profaneness, (which, in St. Paul's language, were either slaves to impurity and iniquity, or 'servants of righteousness unto sanctification,') should also partake in suitable recompenses; that the body which endured grievous pains for righteousness should enjoy comfortable refreshments; that which wallowed in unlawful pleasures should undergo jus ttorments.

I omit (the time so requiring) many considerations pertinent to this purpose: I shall only add, what we farther learn in Scripture (which also the reason of the thing would teach us) concerning this point, that as the bodies of men shall be raised the same in substance, so they shall be much altered in quality: for whereas, according to their present temper and frame, our bodies are frail and weak, apt by every small impression on them to be broken or impaired, needing continual reparation, and, notwithstanding all means used to preserve them, growing to decay and dissolution; and whereas they are destined, after

their resurrection, to a continual abiding in joy or pain, it is necessary they should be so changed, as that they may be fit, without decay, to enjoy those everlasting comforts; able, without dissolution, to undergo those endless pains: and particularly, farther, whereas the body here doth clog the soul, doth excite troublesome passions, doth incline to sensual desire, doth require much care to preserve and please it; such things being inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, that state of spiritual rest and joy which good men are destined to; a change must needs be made therein, preventive of such inconveniences: 'For,' as St. Paul saith, 'flesh and blood' (a body so brittle and passible, so apt to be affected by, so addicted to, sensible goods) cannot enter into the kingdom of God; nor can corruption inherit incorruption; but this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; the dead must be raised incorruptible;' there must be a very sudden mutation, (so St. Paul in several places expressly tells us,) a metamorphosis into a resemblance with Christ's glory; 'a transfiguration of our vile body into conformity with his glorious body:' 'Our body is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual.' But so much concerning the resurrection: I proceed to that which follows thereon.

Life everlasting.

THE immediate consequent of the resurrection, common to just and unjust, is as we have it in the catalogue of fundamental doctrines, set down by the Apostle to the Hebrews, *κρίμα αἰώνιον*, that judgment or doom, by which the eternal state of every person is determined; accordingly 'every man must bear the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or evil.' Now this state generally taken, (as respecting both the righteous and blessed, the wicked and miserable,) as it doth suppose a perpetual duration in being and sense, so it may be called everlasting life; although life (as being commonly apprehended a principal good, and all men

having naturally a strong desire to preserve it, with reference also perhaps to the phrases used under the Law, wherein continuance in life is proposed as a reward to the obedient, and death threatened to transgressors) is used to denote peculiarly the blessed state; as death (the most extreme of legal punishments, and most abominable to nature) is also used to signify the condition of the damned: the resurrection of life, and resurrection of damnation; everlasting life, and everlasting punishment, (shame and everlasting contempt,) being opposed; although, I say, life be commonly thus taken, (as is also the resurrection sometimes for that which belongs only to the righteous, transmitting them into happiness,) yet the reason of the thing requires that here we understand it generally, so as to comprehend both states, (both being matters of faith equally necessary, as it were, and of like fundamental consequence;) both yielding both the highest encouragements to a good, and determents from a bad life: for, as on the one hand, what can excite us more to the performance of duty than so happy a state; a state of highest dignity and glory, of sweetest comfort and joy; of joy full in measure, pure in quality, perpetual in duration, perfect in all respects to the utmost capacity of our nature; wherein all our parts and faculties shall be raised to their highest pitch of perfection, our bodies become free from all corruptibility and decay, all weakness and disease, all grossness, unwieldiness, defilement, and deformity, shall be rendered incorruptible, glorious, and spiritual; our souls in their nature perfected, in their inclinations rectified, in their appetites satisfied; the understanding being full of light, clear and distinct in knowlege of truth, free from error and ignorance; the will steadily inclined to good, ready to comply with God's will, free from all perverseness and weakness; our affections set in right order and frame, with constant regularity tending to that which is truly good, and taking full delight therein: wherein we should enjoy the blissful presence and sight of God, smiling in love and favor on us, of our gracious Redeemer, of the holy angels, of the just made perfect; whose company and conversation how unconceivably sweet and delightful must it be! wherein nothing adverse or troublesome can befall us; no un-

pleasant or offensive object present itself to us; no want, or need of any thing; no care, or fear, or suspicion; no labor or toil, no sorrow or pain, no regret or distaste, no stir or contention, no listlessness or satiety; 'God will wipe,' as it is in the Apocalypse, 'every tear from their eyes;' and death shall be no more, nor sorrow, nor clamor, (or complaint,) nor pain any more: in fine, a state surpassing all words to express it, all thoughts to conceive it, of which the highest splendors and choicest pleasures here are but obscure shadows, (do yield but faint and imperfect resemblances;) comparable to which 'no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, nor hath it ascended into any heart to conceive the like,' (as St. Paul out of the prophet Isaiah tells us;) the firm belief, I say, and careful consideration of the certainty, by a pious and holy life, of acquiring right unto and possession of such a state, must needs be the greatest excitement possible thereto; as must the loss and falling short thereof be of mighty efficacy to withdraw us from impiety; as on this hand, so on the other hand, the being persuaded that by neglecting our duty, and transgressing God's law, we shall certainly incur intolerable pains and miseries, without ease or respite, without hope or remedy, without any end; that we shall for ever not only be secluded from God's presence and favor, be deprived of all rest, comfort, and joy; but detruded into utmost wretchedness; a state more dark and dismal, more forlorn and disconsolate, than we can imagine; which not the sharpest pain of body, not the bitterest anxiety of mind, any of us ever felt, can in any measure represent; wherein our bodies shall be afflicted continually with a sulphureous flame, not scorching the skin only, but piercing the inmost sinews; our souls incessantly bit and gnawed on by a worm, (the worm of bitter remorse for our wretched perverseness and folly; of horrid despair ever to get out of this sad estate;) under which vexations unexpressible, always enduring pangs of death, always dying, we shall never die: this persuasion, I say, must needs most effectually deter us from those courses of impiety, which certainly lead to so miserable a condition. If it cannot, what can do it? We must, beyond all impression that any reason can make on us, be irrecoverably stupid or obstinate; infinitely careless of our

own good, bent to our ruin. But these things the time will not permit me farther to dilate on; and I did formerly (in treating on our Saviour's coming to judgment) somewhat largely press considerations of this nature. I shall only therefore conclude with a prayer to Almighty God, that, according to his infinite mercy, he, by his gracious assistance leading us in the ways of piety and obedience, would bring us into everlasting life and happiness; withdrawing us from impiety and iniquity, would deliver us from eternal death and misery: to whom be all praise and glory for ever. Amen.

END OF VOL. VI.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

JUST PUBLISHED,

In 5 vols. small 8vo. Price £1. 17*s*. 6*d*. neatly bound in cloth,

THE WORKS

OF

BISHOP SHERLOCK,

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B. D.

This Edition includes many scarce Tracts, now first collected.